Elder's Corner

For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not, (Isa. 30:15)

Just some thoughts this morning that come out of the verse above that we studied at last night's Mid-Week prayer meeting and Bible study. As the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob were being freed from Egyptian bondage the **Lord God** let them know that they were **to be a special treasure to** Him **above all people** (if they obeyed His **voice** and kept His **covenant) (Exod. 19:5).** Forty years later, as they were about to enter the promised land, **the Lord God** reminded the **children of Israel** again regarding their unique position among the peoples of the world:

> **The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deut. 7:7-8)**

Despite the way that **God** blessed **the children of Israel**, their history, as recorded in Judges and Samuel and the Kings, reveals that they failed miserably in obeying God's voice and keeping His **covenant.**

The first major prophet, Isaiah, wrote to **the children of Israel** for that reason**. The Lord God**, through that prophet, alerted the **people** to the possibility of coming judgment because of their disobedience to Him. But, being the gracious **God** that He is, in the verse at the top of this article, you find Him as **the Holy One of Israel** inviting **the children of Israel** to return to Him. **"But you would not."** However, **the Lord** didn't give up on His chosen **people.** He sent similar invitations through later **prophets: "Return you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings" (Jer. 322); "Return to Me," says the Lord of hosts, "and I will return to you." (Zech. 1:3);** and **" 'Return to Me, and I will return to you,' says the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:7).** Response to our Lord's repeated invitations was minimal at best. **Israel would not.** Four hundred years after Malachi **the Holy One of Israel** stood near the temple in **Jerusalem** and said:

> **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! (Matt. 23:37)**

Israel would not.

Nineteen hundred years have gone by. Years when **the Lord** made **the bread of adversity and the water of affliction (Isa. 30: 20)** heavy on His chosen **people**. Once a dispersed **people,** many have now returned to the land promised to them by divine **covenant.** The nations of the world, through the godless UN, have recognized **Israel** as a legitimate nation with a right to exist (1948). The dry **bones** have indeed come together, **but there was no breath in them (Ezek. 37:7, 8).** Since the birth of the church a faithful Jewish remnant has come to faith in Jesus Christ as their **Lord** and Savior. But by and large, they will not **return to the Holy One of Israel.**

In the meantime, **the Holy One of Israel** is waiting to **be gracious to** His **people (Isa. 30:18).** In a coming day His grace will be demonstrated powerfully, visibly, and supernaturally, in a way, and at a time which no longer allows rejection by **the children of Israel**:

> **"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. (Zech. 12:10)**

Joel 2:28 speaks of the same outpouring of God's **Holy Spirit.** The dry **bones** will finally have **breath.** Finally, **the house of Israel and the house of Judah** will receive the blessings of **the covenant** that **the Lord God** made with them long ago.

> **But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; *and I will be their God, and they shall be My people*. (Jer. 31:31-33)**

On a related note. If you love the Jewish **people** as I do, **pray for the peace of Jerusalem** as never before **(Ps. 122:6).** Since the nation's response to the Hamas terrorist attack on Oct. 7, 2023 and now in response to their involvement in the war against a nation (Iran) which seeks its destruction, antisemitism is rising at an alarming level, even in the United States. Consider this headline from Politico today:" "In seismic shift, more than 100 House Democrats vote to end Israel aid." Maranatha!