

Israel of God

Jeremiah 31 has been a revelation to me because it is the clearest promise I've ever seen in the Old Testament concerning the Israel of God. It has given me much faith and vision for what the Lord is going to do according to His faithfulness in His promise to us. Verse 22 says, "'How long will you go here and there, faithless daughter?' for the Lord has created a new thing in the earth — a woman will encompass a man." I am seeing that this new thing is the new creation we have become in Christ Jesus. It is the New Israel through whom all God's promises will be fulfilled. You once talked about how we must make the Jews jealous. You said that Rom 12-14 was how we would do it. Paul spoke of his burden for Israel in Rom 9-11 and then in Rom 12 he tells us – the church – how to do it. Jer 31:2 says, "Set up for yourself roadmarks, place for yourself guideposts; direct your mind to the highway, the way by which you went. Return, O Virgin of Israel, return to these your cities." Everyone must see that our Father wants Israel to be a people, a city, and the pure virgin will be a people. All the writers of the New Testament saw that and it is graphic in 1 Pet 1 and 2, especially 1 Pet 2:5-10. Until a person sees God's purpose, that is, that God's purpose will only be done through Israel, then the message of the cross in 1 Cor 1:17 is still only mystical to them. Until we see our need to be a part of Israel to be doing God's will then there is no need to give up everything to be a part of that people. In order for a person to become a Jew he had to give up his old citizenship, his old cultural and family ties, everything, to take identity as a Jew. But once a person sees Israel, then the command of Jesus Christ to give up wives, husbands, children, family, farms, business, education, all selfish ambition, in short to deny yourself and pick up your cross, finally makes sense. Only then can a person see the need to surrender everything. For a person who claims to know the Lord, living an independent life, seeking the things of the Gentiles, living like the Gentiles, there is no need *not* to live like the Gentiles. It is impossible for such a person to not live like the Gentiles. He couldn't live like Israel because he is not in the *land* of Israel – the church. He is not yet a vital (bone of bone and flesh of flesh) part of the new creation. Therefore, the command consistently in the New Testament, "Don't live like the Gentiles, don't seek the things of the Gentiles, you can't serve God and Mammon, you can't love the world and the Lord, don't conform to the way of thinking of the world and the lifestyle of the world," has absolutely no meaning to one who does not realize that they need to be Israel.

Most of the Jews remained in captivity and never became Israel. Only those who followed Ezra and Nehemiah and listened to their word became Israel. And Jer 31 says that in the later days we will understand it clearly that, "at that time [which is now] I will be the God of all the families of *Israel*, and they shall be My people." Verses 4-6 "Again I will build you and you shall be rebuilt, *O virgin of Israel*, again you shall take up your tambourines, and go forth to the dances of the merrymakers. Again you shall plant vineyards... and shall enjoy them. For there shall be a day when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim shall call out, 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God.' " So therefore those outside of true baptism can never be Israel. They can never build *with* the Lord. Only those in the church have the chance to *become* the pure virgin remnant.

So if we see that we *are* indeed Israel then we *won't* live like the Gentiles, we will seek first His kingdom and His righteousness because His is the God of Israel and He will defend Israel, and He will provide for Israel forever. And then Jeremiah talks about how the Lord will make this new thing by the New Covenant. Verse 33, "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord, I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach each man his neighbor and each man his brother saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sins I will remember no more."

So I see how we in the Body, now that we have had a glimpse of the Lord and His mighty and glorious deeds, must see ever more clearly that *we are Israel* in order for us to obey the requirements of the Gospel. Those who are in the Body are the only ones who can qualify to overcome — to do His will. Just like Jesus was the only man who could qualify to have dominion over Satan. What I have said is brief, but I think you can see my heart in this.

Fellowship with the Lord Jesus outside the Church as personal and wonderful as it is may not correspond to fellowship with the Lord in the Body of Christ. These two Christs may not even like one another. A person may have wonderful fellowship with Jesus outside the Church and at the same time stone those who are sent from the Church to them by the Spirit who is one, the Lord. This is a mystery in this age. What is the answer? (1 Cor 10:20-21). 1 Cor 10:16-17 is essential to know the one true Christ for we have no life in ourselves outside of the participation in the Body and Blood of our Lord (Jn 6).