

An aerial photograph of Jerusalem, Israel, showing the city's dense urban landscape and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the foreground. The city is built on a hillside, with a prominent stone wall and a large church building with a dome and a tower. The background shows a wide river and more modern buildings.


Edition

ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

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Thoughts about the book of Esther related to recent History and our time

It is a real question for the Jewish people and also for Christians, how it was possible for the Holocaust to take place in civilized countries like Germany and Austria. Germany and Austria were so-called Christian countries, as at least 90% of the population were baptized and many musicians, poets and philosophers came forth from there. Still the worst murders that one has ever heard of, were initiated and carried out through these nations. These are difficult questions, but we have to ask them, because if we do not seek answers, the danger of repeating the same tragedy is unavoidable. I believe that the book of Esther gives us part of the answer.

Before we look into the book of Esther let me quote a word that Jesus spoke in *Luke 11, 23-26*:

“He who is not with Me, is against me, and he who does not gather with Me, scatters. When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places seeking rest; and finding none, he says I will return to my house, from which I came. And when he comes and find it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse, than the first.”

Being passive is a very dangerous way to live. If we know the word of God but we do not live according to His word, we open the doors for evil spirits. This applies not only to a person but also to a whole nation. It is not enough to know about the word of God. Jesus is warning us that if we don't really fill our house with the Holy Spirit other evil Spirits will take advantage and it will be worse with that person or nation than ever before.

The Apostle Paul writes in his letter, *2 Thessalonians 2, 10-12*: ***“and every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because***

they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason, God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness". I ask myself the question, 'how can we bring real fruits of repentance', and this is one of the reasons why I'd like to share about the book of Esther. It gives us more insight into what happened in the time of the Second World War and today.

The name Esther comes from the word, "nistar" and means hidden. God is hidden in the book of Esther and we don't even find the word God or prayer in the book of Esther. There is a hidden story and message from God for His people and I believe that the book of Esther has a special prophetic meaning for our time.

We read in Esther: 3: 1, *"After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him."* Just before this took place, Mordecai, a Jew, saved the life of the king by telling him about a plot made against him. The king placed exactly the wrong person in the most prominent position. Haman was a descendent from the house of Agag, the king of the Amalekites.

The Lord told King Saul to destroy the people of Amalek totally, but he kept their king Agag alive. *1 Sam 15: 2-3, "That says the Lord of Hosts: I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."* Saul's disobedience cost him the kingdom and the throne of Israel and the prophet Samuel had to tell him in 1 Samuel 15, 22: *"Obedience is better than sacrifice."*

After this the Lord chose another king and the prophet Samuel went and anointed David. Haman was a descendent of king Agag, who would not even have been born, if king Saul had been obedient to the word of God. As Joshua was battling against the people of Amalek

centuries before, Moses grew tired during his intercession for Israel. Hur and Aaron needed to hold up his hands to support him in prayer. Through this Israel won the battle. It seems that it was firstly a prayer battle that brought the victory over the people of Amalek. God was determined to fight against this spirit, which is behind the people of Amalek and there are no other people in the Bible, whom God was willing to destroy completely. ***Exodus 17, 14-16: "Then the Lord said to Moses, write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner, for he said: Because the Lord has sworn, the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."***

In the year 2000 we were a small group praying and fasting at the memorial place in the former death camp in Treblinka. The Lord showed us, that as we deal with the Nazi Movement and the spirit behind it, we are dealing with the same spirit of Amalek. A few days later we had the privilege to be part of the "March of the Living" which takes place every year from Auschwitz I to Auschwitz II Birkenau. The main Rabbi at that time was Rabbi Lau from Jerusalem and he finished his speech at Auschwitz II Birkenau with exactly this word from ***Exodus 17, 16: "Because the Lord has sworn, the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."*** We understood that this impression was right and looked up all the scriptures about the people of Amalek.

Why was the Lord so angry with the people of Amalek? We find the answer in ***Deuteronomy 25, 17: "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary, and he did not fear God. "Therefore, it shall be, when the Lord your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget."*** The people of Amalek did not fight like soldiers would fight in a normal war. Normally the strong young men went in front of their people and they fought against the army of the enemy, which was also set up with their strong young men. But the Amalekites attacked the rear guard of the

Israelites from behind, which meant, the mothers and children, the elderly and the weak, which today you would say were the civilian people. God said that this strategy and actions are without any fear of God.

In this same spirit the concentration camps were built and especially the weak ones, the mothers and children, and the elderly, were tricked and killed right away. What was looking like showers, was in reality the gas chambers. To give an example, I will try to describe the worst death camp of all the camps which was in Treblinka.

First of all there was no camp to live in at all and the Jewish people needed to wait in the trains until their turn came to be gassed. Probably more than one million Jews were killed there in only 13 months. Everything on the railway station was a trap. Many of the people were no longer alive when they arrived at this death camp, Treblinka, after a long and cold journey without water and food. From the little village of Treblinka, a train track was leading into the woods. A mock-railway station was set up there with signs to Berlin and Warsaw. A clock was painted on the wall always showing 12 o'clock. Next to the ramp was a house decorated with a "Red Cross". The older people, or those who could not walk anymore were brought here and right away murdered by shooting them in the neck. All those who could still walk needed to go to a pathway called the "Schlauch" which means the "pipeline". Shortly after, they had to undress, and go on to the gas chambers. The 13 gas chambers were decorated with a "Star of David" to make them believe that it was a synagogue. Even a curtain from a torah shrine in a synagogue was put in front of the gas chambers with a word in Hebrew from *Psalm 118:20: "This is the gate of righteousness the righteous will enter"*.

I often think about how we mocked God Himself in a terrible way, and what will happen to our nations who did this, if there is no real repentance followed by the fruits of repentance. Paul wrote in his letter to the *Galatians 6, 7: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows"* This truth relates not only to one person, but also to a

whole Nation. Sin is not going away if we just wait and let time pass by. We are called to confess our sins and the sins of our people before God and the victims of our transgressions.

Today, the same spirit of Amalek is operating in and against Israel and America through the terror attacks. We saw how a passenger plane crashed into the “Twin Towers” in New York City, or young suicide bombers go into discotheques, restaurants or buses full of civilians. This is the same spirit that stood behind the Nazi Movement, the spirit of Amalek is without any fear of God.

Haman is accusing the Jews before the King, with the same accusation, which continues over thousands of years. *Esther 3, 8-9: “Then Haman said to the King Ahasuerus, “there is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other peoples, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore, it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king’s treasuries”.*

There was always the problem in the nations, where Jews lived, that the Jews were different and lived according to their own laws, which were connected with their faith in the God of Israel. Just to be different was already a reason for persecution. The accusation was that the Jewish people do not keep the king’s law. This was only true, if the king or anybody else was demanding godly honour and worship for himself. Then, of course, the Jewish people could not be part of it, because they knew the first commandment not to worship other Gods. Exodus 20, 2: *“I am the Lord your God,...You shall have no other Gods before me”.* This commandment is also for us as Christians and that is the reason why so many believers in Jesus as the Messiah lost their lives in the first centuries during the time of the great persecution under the Roman Caesars.

Money always played a big role in the Middle Ages and in the time of the Nazi regime. If someone borrowed money from a Jewish person in

the Middle Ages, and he was not willing to pay it back, he had the Jewish person falsely accused and killed, which freed him from paying the debts. The Nazis took all the possessions of the Jewish people and even cut their hair off and used it before they went to the gas chambers. They also took the gold teeth out of the mouths of dead Jewish bodies. In our time the oil coming mostly from Arab states and the economy play a bigger role in the negative attitude of western world towards Israel as many would like to admit. Haman planned to kill all Jewish people in the whole kingdom of Ahasveros. (His kingdom reached from Kush to Hodu, which means from Ethiopia to India with their main centre in today's Iraq).

Haman's reason for wanting to kill all the Jews, was related to their faith in the of God of Israel. Hitler did not only demand to be greeted as a head of state, but also as a Messiah. He demanded to be greeted with "Heil Hitler" which means salvation is coming from him. The people needed to fall down before Haman and worship him like a god. Haman already wanted to have a "Final Solution". It was hindered at that time through the prayer and fasting of Esther and Mordecai with their friends, but sadly later agreed on under Hitler at the Wannsee Conference in Berlin February 1942. Because the King gave Haman such great authority he wrote a letter: *Esther 3, 13: "And the letters were sent by couriers into all the kings provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day"*.

The spirit which stands behind the Nazi movement is also now behind the fundamentalist Moslems. Their declared goal is the total annihilation of the Jewish state and their people. I do not believe that the Holocaust was God's intention and if something like this would happen again it would be related to the tragic state of the church, which is again sleeping for the biggest part. Since there are many and clear approvals for a newly growing Anti-Semitism and Racism, we need to wake up.

We are called as Christians to stand with the covenant people of God. Many Christians have a strange attitude when it comes to fighting

against something. We are taught to love our enemies and to love all people, but not the powers that are behind these people. The question is, how to fight these spirits standing behind these people and their ideology. Often the military cannot get a hold of these terrorists, because they work together with spiritual powers. This explains also why some leaders of the main terrorist organizations are able to hide for so many years. It doesn't seem to be possible to find some of the famous ones. It is a spiritual prayer battle in intercession and it is a vital and a real call from God to the Body of Christ. ***Esther 4, 3: "As Mordecai and the other Jews heard about this new law that Haman made in the name of the King, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes."***

The Jewish people responded like the people in Nineveh. As Esther tells Mordecai how little she can do, he gives her an answer which is very important for us as the Body of Christ in the Nations. ***Esther 4, 13-14: "And Mordecai said them as an answer to Esther: Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*** This word from Mordecai is a very prophetic word from God for the whole church today. If we keep completely silent, God will send help for Israel from another place but the church will perish.

In other words, the Church will lose her call to be salt of the world. If the church is only proclaiming what all the world considers right, then we miss the call from the Lord and also our destiny in this world. Jesus explained in ***Matthew 5, 13: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."*** For many years we have been meeting for weeks of prayer and fasting. I believe the Lord is preparing us for a time like this. We have to call for prayer and fasting meetings, even if we are small groups, all over the world.

After Esther says she is ready to pay the price, we read this in ***Esther 4, 16: "Go gather together all the Jews which are in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat***

or drink for three days, night or day." Esther's maidservants in the castle surely were not Jews. We know this because it's written that she did not reveal her identity until that day. Here we have an example of Gentiles, who are willing to stand in fasting and prayer, with the Jewish people and help them out of destruction and danger of life.

As Esther and Mordecai started to fast, they didn't have any clue how God would answer, but they had faith that He would answer. They knew this could cost their lives. After Esther received grace to come before the king and he granted her request to come to her banquet, she felt she needed to wait another day to make her real request. She felt the idea was right but the timing wasn't. When the king asked her why he was invited to dinner, she answered: *Esther 5, 8: "If the king regards me with favour and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question."* Exactly in the night things changed for the good. The king could not sleep and asked someone to read for him from the chronicles of the kings. There they found, the story how Mordecai had saved the king's life. It came to his attention that Mordecai was never honoured or rewarded for this life-saving act.

On the same night, the wickedness of Haman was fully exposed. Haman could not handle the fact that Mordecai was not afraid of him and did not honour him as a God. Mordecai's fear of God was much stronger than any fear of man. Haman felt secure, because Esther had again invited him for dinner and he went ahead, and at the advice of his wife had already prepared the gallows for Mordecai. The evil intents of his heart came into the light. Even in the house of the King they knew that Haman had prepared gallows for Mordecai. *Esther 7, 9: "Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman." Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"*

The wickedness of Haman was exposed right away and the King immediately gave order to hang him. Then the king took the ring of

authority from Haman and gave the ring to Mordecai and to Esther. Through prayer and fasting the whole situation was changed and turned around. We see it also through the prayers of the prophet Daniel. His prayers and fasting released a fight in the heavenly places and ushered in a new time of restoration and the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. During the time of fasting by Esther, Mordechai and their friends, God revealed His plan how this evil power could be broken and overthrown, which wanted to destroy and annihilate the entire Jewish people.

As they were completely dependent on God, He turned the fate for the good for the Jewish people. Esther asked for the revoking of Haman's law. ***Esther 8, 5: "If it pleases the king, she said, and if he regards me with favour and thinks it is the right thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let an order be written overruling the dispatches that Haman, son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the kings provinces."*** This legitimate request was never fully answered by the king. The reason for it is in ***Esther 8, 8: "Now write another decree in the king's name, on behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring---for no document written in the king's name can be revoked."*** This law was never revoked, the king only gave Esther the right to declare a new law, in his name, which gave the Jews the right of self-defence towards their enemies.

Even this right of Israel's self-defence is today strongly opposed by many nations. When Israel is targeting known terrorists before they are able to carry out more of their acts of terror, criticism is coming from many nations. We know this, and can come in our prayers in the name of a greater king, Yeshua, who has been given power over heaven and earth. He sealed His authority with His own suffering and death.

This turning point brought the fear of the Lord to many people also from the nations. ***Esther 8, 17: "And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized Them"***. This means that people of the nations turned to the true God of Israel, because there were

no other people at that time who had a revelation of the true God. It is interesting that Mordecai and Esther are from the tribe of Benjamin and from the house of Kish. This was the family of king Saul, because he also was from the house of Kish. Esther got an opportunity from God at a later point in time to put things right in bringing the judgment of God over the people of Amalek. Today our fight is not against flesh and blood or any nation, but against evil powers which try to rule over whole nations. By the grace of the Lord, God is giving us an opportunity today to stand with His chosen people, knowing that we and our forefathers missed it before and brought bloodguilt over our nations.

Esther understood that the judgment of God over the house of Haman needed to be completed. *Esther 9, 13-14: "Then Esther said, If it pleases the King, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows. So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons"*. Saul had sinned in not putting a ban on the people of Amalek and not killing Agag, king of the Amalekites. If we, as believers from the Nations again leave Israel all alone in the hour of great need, and we say we did not know, we have no excuse, because we do know from history, and have to learn from it.

There was an interesting article in the *Jerusalem Post* about the Nuremberg Trials. Something unexpected happened at the execution of Julius Streicher, one of the high-ranking Nazis sentenced to death. Moments before Streicher was hanged in the early hours of October 16th 1946, Newsweek reported: "He stared at the witnesses facing the gallows and shouted 'Purim fest, 1946'." What did Streicher mean by this? Why would a condemned Nazi mention Purim in his last words? Streicher was obviously familiar with the book of Esther, which tells of the attempted genocide Haman planned, and how, when his plans were thwarted and they were defeated, Haman and his ten sons were hanged. Streicher was actually aware of the irony of history – that he was one of the ten Nazis hanged after being sentenced at the Nuremberg Trials. (In fact, eleven had been sentenced to death but Goering committed suicide before his

sentence was carried out.) And so in the end ten were hanged, just like Haman's ten sons in the book of Esther. Amazingly, Streicher saw the historic link between the Nazi genocide and the attempted genocide of Haman, who, like the Nazis, also intended to wipe out every Jew – man, woman and child.

We are called by God, to be a blessing, a helper to comfort God's chosen people. Isaiah 40: 1, "***Comfort, comfort My people! Says your God.***"

Christa Behr

Repentance in the life of the Prophet Daniel

Sometimes we do not really know how to relate to repentance and we feel uneasy. Peter gave a powerful message in Acts 2, 37: ***“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”*** The result at that time was that the word of God reached their hearts and they asked what to do? When we deal with guilt beyond own personal sin, we are sometimes confronted with confusion. Some people see only a long dark tunnel before their eyes and therefore prefer not to enter. But how can we describe the light at the end of this tunnel? There is the question if we have to identify as believers with the sins of our Nation.

I think we can be believers without relating to the sins of our nation, but we cannot know the heart of our Lord Jesus if the things which move His heart concerning our nation are not important to us. Paul writes in the Philippians 3, 10 ***“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings.”*** Jesus is the real High Priest who is still praying for all of us. Hebrews 7, 25: ***“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”*** As Germans and Austrians, we hear the question: When have we done enough repentance concerning the Holocaust?

This sin was on a national basis, which means that more than 90% of the population greeted Hitler with the greeting “Heil Hitler” translated as salvation is coming from him. For national sins there has to be a national repentance. I don’t think that it would be realistic to expect that all Germans will repent, but at least all the believers from the different denominations, should do so, which means the whole church has to respond to God’s call for repentance. We also have to pray for God’s mercy and that He would give us a sign, that the powers of anti-Semitism

and racism is broken in our society, because God is also looking for the fruits of repentance.

We see a wonderful example in the life of the prophet Daniel. Daniel was young as he was brought into the Babylonian captivity and he was not responsible for the sins of his forefathers. He also did not follow just his tradition, because he was not from the tribe of the priests, but from the family of the king. He did understand that the identification in prayer with the sins of the forefathers was not only reserved for the tribe of the priests but God was also looking for volunteers.

Daniel paid attention to what is written in the book of Jeremiah that after 70 years God would release Israel from her captivity. He did not take this promise as an oracle and just wait until 70 years were fulfilled, counting on it that time would take away the sin of the nation. No, he knew that there needed to be someone or even a group of believers to stand in the gap for the sins of his nation and repent on behalf of the people. Daniel was young, but he did not think that his generation was any better than his forefathers.

Jesus also warned us not to think ourselves to be better than our forefathers. He said in Matthew 23, 30-32: ***“You say: ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Therefore, you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt.’*** How would we react in a time of dictatorship and under the threat of losing our life? We still have to find out.

We see in the book of Daniel how much God was waiting for a person who would intercede and how much the Lord appreciated Daniels prayers of repentance. God sent to him the archangel Gabriel, He said to him: “You are greatly beloved” and there was a response in heaven to his prayers right away. Daniel 9, 23: ***“At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved;***

therefore, consider the matter, and understand the vision." Heaven was waiting for someone who would identify with the guilt of his nation.

Daniel's prayer released a battle in the heavenly places. Only three times in the Bible the angel Gabriel was sent to the people of Israel: to Daniel, Zechariah and Mary. He only delivered a wonderful word to Daniel and Mary. Luke 1, 28: ***"Rejoice, highly favoured one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"*** He said to Daniel "you are most beloved" but to Zechariah: "Why did you not believe?" Luke 1, 19: ***"I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."***

God is calling Daniel, "you are most beloved". Why was Daniel addressed like this? He needed to hear it, that God loved him very much. If God is saying to someone: "Do not be afraid!" He is saying it because this person is afraid. If God is saying "you are most beloved", then He has to communicate this message, because this person does not feel the love of God. As Daniel recognized the sin of his people, he identified so much with the sin, that it was not easy for him to see the love of God towards him.

The same happened to Jesus on the cross. He took on Himself the sin of the whole world and He prayed: Matthew 27, 46 ***"My God, my God why have you forsaken me?"*** Daniel needed the affirmation, that God still loved him.

We can ask why did Daniel, "the most beloved" and also the apostle John see so many terrible visions about the future. John too got the title: John 21,7 ***"The disciple whom Jesus loved."*** To his beloved servants, the Lord shows very difficult things. One of the answers we find in the book of Daniel itself: Daniel 12:3 ***"Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."*** At the end time many things will happen

which, we cannot understand and it can work as an attack against our faith in the Lord.

The first goal of the enemy is to destroy our faith. Therefore, Jesus is praying for Peter. Luke 22:31 and 32b ***“And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail.”*** Apostle Paul wrote this to Timothy towards the end of his life: 2. Timothy 4: 7-8 ***“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”***

It was not the many good deeds Paul did that brought him the crown of righteousness, but keeping faith and loving the appearance of our Lord Jesus. At the end of time, many people are losing hope and will fearfully wait for the things which are still to come. But this is not what the Lord expects from His children. He told us in Luke 21:28: ***“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”***

Daniel and John are counted as friends of the Lord and also Abraham and Moses. The information God gave to Abraham and Moses brought them into deeper prayer and intercession. Genesis 18: 17 ***“And the Lord said: Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?”*** In the book of Revelation, we see how God will involve those who are overcomers to influence the nations and rule over them. Revelation 2: 26 ***“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.”***

The situation in our nations can change through our prayer and intercession. Daniel asked for forgiveness for the sins of his nation. Therefore, God had nothing to add. He was also willing to pay a high price. He prayed and fasted sometimes without food and sometimes eating only vegetables. Before he started with his intercession for the people of Israel, he humbles himself before the Lord for his own sins and

shortcomings. Whenever we repent on behalf of our nation we have to repent first for our own sin. Daniel 9: 20 ***“Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel”.***

As we had our first prayer and fasting week in Auschwitz in 1995, we did not really know how it would work out for everyone only to drink for a week without eating. But surprisingly it was very easy for most of them except for one person, who was living in sin. The Holy Spirit helped us to repent with a broken heart.

We cannot repent in our own power, but we can hinder the Holy Spirit, if we don't give Him enough room in our lives or gatherings. The Lord did not speak with Daniel anymore about the past, but only about the future. The prophecies Daniel received are very deep and we read in the book of Revelation that the apostle John received almost the same visions Daniel saw. He saw the Son of Man but he did not know his name. To John the name was revealed, the Lion and the Lamb, the son of God: “Yeshua”. This experience of Daniel is a key for all of us. He confessed the sins of the past and the Lord spoke to him about the prophecies for the future.

I think that we also do not get important prophesies for the future if we do not take seriously the sins of the past. The angel Gabriel told Daniel that his prayers were already answered as he started to humble himself before the Lord, but his prayers released a great spiritual battle in the heavenly places. Daniel 10: 12- 13 ***“Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and beloved, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.”*** Through the help and support of the archangel Michael, who is the angel for Israel, it was possible for Gabriel to leave the battle in heavens and come for a short time to Daniel to inform him about the future of his people.

The battle against the prince of Persia was fierce. Persia, at that time, is Iran today. We get the impression that in our time this battle is not only going on in the heavenly places, but also on earth. In the letter of Peter, we read that we are all called to be priests and kings before the Lord. 1Peter 2, 9 ***“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.”*** But we cannot separate the priestly ministry, which is related to suffering, from the ministry of a king to rule. In his prayers of repentance Daniel laid the foundation for what we see in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah. It was not important to Daniel that his contribution was not made public. The fruit of his prayers was only seen many years later. Heaven had noticed his prayers and repentance. The Lord used it to bring Israel back into his God given destiny.

Paul and his relationship to Jerusalem

Introduction

These thoughts about Paul and his relationship to Jerusalem came to me over many years, not all in one moment. I have lived in Jerusalem now for 29 years, and during this time, I've heard the question: Why it is so difficult to live in a deep fellowship and unity in the spirit and truth with Jewish believers and believers from the Nations? This bible study about "Paul and his relationship to Jerusalem" cannot give a full answer to the question of Jewish and Gentile identity, but it points out that Paul was able, by the grace of God, to embrace both parts of the Body of Christ---Jew and Gentile. Some believers relate to the person of Peter as being more than just one of the apostles, because he got the keys of the Kingdom. The Roman Catholic Church made a whole teaching out of it. He opens the door for the gospel in Jerusalem and to the nations. He is also called "*the Apostle to the circumcised*" (Galatians 2: 7).

The Beginning of Paul's Ministry

Paul is known as "the apostle to the nations" but we read in Acts 9:15, "*This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.*" Paul also had a call to the children of Israel because Ananias said to him: "The Lord has called you first to the Gentiles and kings, and then to the children of Israel." God

does not put the nations before Israel, but at the beginning of Paul's ministry, he is sent first to the nations, and then to the people of Israel. Right after his conversion, Paul went to Jerusalem and preached the gospel, but the Lord and the local church sent him away and he went to the Gentiles. Acts 22: 21, ***"Then the Lord said to me, 'go, I will send you far away to the Gentiles'".*** His testimony is directed to all men. Acts 22: 15, ***"You will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard"***. Before his conversion Paul especially persecuted the church in Jerusalem: Acts 9: 13, ***"Then Ananias answered, Lord I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem."*** Paul also reports about it in Acts 26: 10.

I believe that Paul prayed a lot for the believers in Jerusalem and that by the grace of God, which can turn everything around, he would one day become a great blessing to the body of Christ in Jerusalem. He gathered money from the churches among the Gentiles to bring it personally to Jerusalem and he asked the church in Rome for prayer support: Romans 15: 25, ***"But now I go to Jerusalem to minister to the saints."*** Verses 30 -31 ***"Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me ... and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints."*** Paul wanted to bring a financial gift to the poor among of the saints in Jerusalem. Galatians 2: 10, ***"All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do."*** It seems to be such a simple task, but Paul knew that he could not just deliver the money through someone, but

that he was called by God to deliver this gift himself. Even though he was eager to be a real blessing to the body of Christ in Jerusalem, we know that the outcome was not a pleasant one. He was put into chains and never got out of them again. I believe that one day his prayers will be answered as the church gets more revelation over Paul's relationship to Jerusalem and his prophetic visit.

Paul's life and calling were deeply related to the mystery of Christ and His bride, and the gospel of grace. He loved his Jewish people very much and therefore he said in Romans 9, 2- 4: ***"That I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself was accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites."*** Paul was willing to give up his deep relationship with the Lord, which was the greatest treasure in his life, for his brethren in the flesh, if that were possible. Although the redemptive suffering was accomplished by Jesus on the cross, Paul says in Colossians 1: 24: ***"I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church."*** The Lord is calling Paul to take part in the priestly suffering for the preparation of the bride of Christ.

Paul talks to those who boast about their Jewishness, in Philippians 3: 5: ***"[I was] circumcised on the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews."*** His identity was totally rooted in the Jewish people and in the nation of Israel.

Even Jesus Himself declares as the risen Lord from Heaven, that His identity is still related to the people of Israel and the land. The Lord spoke from heaven to Paul on his way to Damascus as Paul was asking, Acts 22: 8: ***“Who are you Lord?” I asked. “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,” He replied.*** Why did Yeshua not say? “I am Jesus from Heaven?” His identity is still related to the city of Nazareth in which he was raised. At His very last introduction in the book of Revelation, Jesus relates to His Jewish people. Rev. 22, 16: ***“I am the root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”*** Shortly after his conversion near Damascus, Paul came to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, but he was not able. Acts 9: 26 -27, ***“But they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles.”*** After the introduction by Barnabas, he was accepted. Verse 28: ***“So he was with them in Jerusalem, coming in and going out. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.”***

The Jews who came against Paul were from Asia, and very often people who live outside their own countries in the Diaspora, are more zealous than the locals. They also started an uproar on the Temple Mount at Paul's last visit in Jerusalem. (Acts 24: 19) Because of his religious background Paul was able to confront and argue with the religious people in Jerusalem. He knew their way of thinking and was not afraid to confront them with the gospel of Yeshua.

Paul was rejected just like the Messiah, Yeshua. We see in John 5 that the Lord Jesus strongly confronted the Pharisees and the scribes without compromise. The problem in Jerusalem at that time was a lack of readiness to receive the gospel, to repent and to change their personal lives. Right away they wanted to get rid of Paul and his uncomfortable testimony and challenge. Peter was, because of his background as a fisherman, able to be a challenge in a different way to the people in Jerusalem. The Lord Yeshua and the church in Jerusalem sent Paul away. Acts 9: 30- 31, ***“When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus. Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”***

A lot of good things happened to the church in Judea, Galilee and Samaria after Paul’s departure. Persecution for the whole church in Israel was prevented and also Paul’s life was spared. We could ask the question, why has Paul the potential to cause persecution for the whole church in Israel? Is there something related to his person? Did he do something wrong as a young believer and disciple? Many years later, Paul himself speaks about his first visit to Jerusalem right after his conversion. Acts 22: 17 -21, ***“Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance and I saw Him saying to me. ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me’. So, I said, ‘Lord they know that in every***

synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe in You. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him'. Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles'.

According to these words of Yeshua, Paul did not do anything wrong. The Lord only informed him about the fact that the people in Jerusalem were not ready at this time to receive his testimony. The problem was outside of Paul's person. He was dealing with the same religious powers, which had come also against Yeshua in Jerusalem. Jerusalem could not face the challenge of his testimony.

Yeshua makes us aware that there is a tremendous resistance against the prophetic testimony in Jerusalem. Luke 13: 33, ***"For it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem."*** Yeshua also talks about the blindness of Jerusalem towards Him. Luke 19: 31- 32, ***"As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it and said, if you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace, but now it is hidden from your eyes."*** The question is what would have brought, and will bring, real salvation and redemption to the people of Israel, and peace to the city of Jerusalem? Yeshua was weeping because He knew that the knowledge of Himself as the Messiah of Israel was the key.

The title Messiah is related to salvation, redemption and a God-given solution. Too often dictators have taken this title in unrighteousness, as at the time of the Romans and in

Germany and Austria over 75 years ago. Authority released from God brings life and peace. Yeshua knows that He is the rightful King over Jerusalem and therefore He said in Matthew 5: 34-35, ***“But I tell you, do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King”***.

The acceptance of the Messiah Yeshua in Israel and all the Nations is the key for the peace of Jerusalem. There is an hour for every Nation when the knowledge of God is available, afterwards it can be hidden for a time. We hear in the Gospel of John what the religious leaders feared, if Jesus would be accepted as the Messiah by the people of Israel. John 11: 48, ***“If we let Him (Yeshua) go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our Nation.”*** What they were afraid of was fulfilled in rejecting Yeshua as the Messiah of Israel. Paul was accused with almost the same words. Acts 21: 28, ***“This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place.”***

The acceptance of the Messiah is still the key for the Land and nation of Israel in her God- given identity. A prophetic testimony was related to Paul's life and his visit to Jerusalem. He was ready also at this time to die for the name of Yeshua, but the Lord makes him aware that He still has a task for him to fulfill, to bring the gospel to the nations. I do believe that Paul's desire and call to be a testimony for Yeshua in Jerusalem was only postponed, and he continued to have a

prophetic vision for the city of Jerusalem in which he was raised. Paul was the only Apostle who had a relationship to Jerusalem before he was a believer. Acts 26: 4 and Acts 22: 3, ***“My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know.”***

Suddenly after a tremendous spiritual breakthrough in Ephesus many years later Paul felt led by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem and after that to Rome. Acts 19: 20-21, ***“So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem saying: “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”*** Please pay attention to the order; first he has to go to Jerusalem and then to Rome. A prophetic word came twice to Paul that he would suffer and be bound with chains in Jerusalem. Therefore, he was asked not to go there. Acts 21: 4 and 10-12, ***“After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, The Holy Spirit says, in this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles’. When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.”*** What does Paul himself say about this journey? We read in Acts 20: 22-24, ***“And see now I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”***

Some believers are convinced that after so many warnings Paul should not have gone to Jerusalem. But I like to ask, what if Paul's decision to go to Jerusalem was a very prophetic act and call from the Lord, which was not understood in his time and also not today? I am convinced that Paul was in the perfect will of God and was supposed to go to Jerusalem. Why? First, he goes bound in the Spirit and of course he speaks about the Holy Spirit. He was able to discern Spirits. Secondly, he was also able to hear the Lord because he counted the cost and was not bound by the fear of death. Paul is answering with much grace. Acts 21: 13, Then Paul answered, ***“Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Yeshua.”***

It seems to me that Paul faced a similar temptation, as had happened to Yeshua Himself, when He spoke about His going up to Jerusalem to suffer there. Even Peter, His close disciple, did not understand Yeshua, and was used for a satanic temptation in the life of the Lord, because he related to this decision of Yeshua to go to Jerusalem and to suffer in a human way. Acts 21: 14, ***“When he would not be persuaded, we gave up and said, The Lord's will be done’.”*** Paul went to Jerusalem as a prophetic sign and for the gospel of grace. Most important is for him to finish his race, which means to fulfill everything the Lord has called him to do. He must have understood this journey to Jerusalem as a part of fulfilling his race. Also, the time seems to be important for him. Acts 20:

16, ***“Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.”***

He also says in Romans 15: 23-25, ***“That he doesn’t have any more place for ministry in the region of Asia and therefore he wants to travel to Rome after his visit to Jerusalem.”***

Could it be that Paul also understood that a breakthrough of his gospel of grace in Jerusalem was related to a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Paul was not called to die in Jerusalem, but it was there that he was put into two chains. Acts 21: 33, ***“The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains.”*** Paul was never released from the chains until his death as a martyr in Rome. Like Yeshua, he was arrested by the Jews and executed by the Romans and so both Jews and Gentiles were involved in his suffering and death. Acts 28: 17, ***“Yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.”*** The whole city was in an uproar because Paul came to Jerusalem. Acts 21: 30 -31, ***“The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut.”*** The prophet told him the truth, that he would be chained and would suffer in Jerusalem, and Paul recognized this word as prophetic from the Holy Spirit. Still he knows that he has to go to Jerusalem, because it was in Jerusalem that the Lord showed him why he was supposed to suffer. It was because of the gospel of God’s grace. Acts 20: 24, ***“To testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”***

He had already suffered for the gospel of grace at other times and in other circumstances. This is why he writes in Galatians 5:11, ***“And I brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offence of the cross has ceased.”*** Paul was misunderstood also in this point. He did not say that the Jewish people should not circumcise their children any more. Nor did he preach circumcision, as something needed for salvation or justification before God. In the letter to Galatians Paul also speaks about false brethren. Galatians 2: 4-5, ***“And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”***

Also, today there is a great battle going on in the church worldwide for the continuation of the truth of the gospel. Another reason why I am convinced that Paul understood the Lord correctly, is that Yeshua Himself stood by his side on the night after his arrest on the Temple Mount. In Acts 23: 11 the Lord said: ***“Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome.”*** This time the Lord Himself is pointing out the order, that first he has to be a testimony in Jerusalem and then in Rome. At the Temple Mount Paul only spoke to defend his case and we can ask: What testimony was Yeshua talking about? I am convinced that his testimony goes beyond his speech on the temple mount and is related to his person and what Paul represents. Paul is an Incarnation of the “one new man” and that is why hell broke loose in Jerusalem,

because his being in Jerusalem was already a confrontation with many religious powers. He knew that a great battle was related to his journey to Jerusalem and therefore he needed more than just some nice prayers at the end of the service. He was asking the church in Rome to battle for him in prayer even though he only knew a few believers there personally. Romans 15: 30-32, ***“Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you.”***

This is an urgent call from Paul for personal prayer support and he is even begging for prayer. It reminds us of the request from Jesus to his disciples in Gethsemane to watch and pray with Him for one hour before He suffered in Jerusalem. Paul turns with his request to the church in Rome and not to the church in Jerusalem. The church in Jerusalem prayed successfully for the deliverance of Peter. Paul knows that he, as the apostle to the nations, should ask the church of the nations to support him personally in prayer.

He also asked the churches in Ephesus, Eph. 6: 18 and Colossians 4: 3 to pray for him. Paul writes in Eph. 3: 1, ***“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles”*** He is saying: My being in prison is related to the redemptive purpose of the Gentiles. There wasn't a real personal relationship between Paul and the church in Jerusalem.

Galatians 1: 22- 24, ***“And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they were hearing only, ‘He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy’. And they glorified God in me.”***

The church in Jerusalem had her own identity and expression of worship, because the members were predominantly Jews or converts. The members were zealous for the law even after they had come to the faith in Jesus. Acts 21: 20, ***“You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law.”*** Paul was happy that so many Jews in Jerusalem had come to a personal faith in the Lord Jesus. James was also encouraged by Paul’s report of what God had done among the nations. Acts 21: 19- 20, ***“When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord.”*** I still believe that Paul must have been saddened by the fact that the church of the nations, and the church in Jerusalem, were two separate entities.

He knew that through the death of Yeshua, Jews and Gentiles are made one. Ephesians 2: 14- 15, ***“For He Himself is our peace, who has made one and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.”*** Now there are not anymore two separate entities but the one body of Christ, the bridal Church made up from Jew and Gentile. But the ministry of Paul to the nations was, in

reality, in a certain way separated from the church in Jerusalem. In Galatians 2: 9 we read: ***“And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.”*** There was a measure of unity and fellowship, for instance, about who should minister among the Gentiles and who among the Jews. But in Jerusalem there was no expression of this unity of the church made up of Jew and Gentile. A tension existed between the church in Jerusalem and the church of the nations. In this light, we understand why Peter did not have a problem to eat with the Gentile believers in Antioch until James and those from Jerusalem came. Galatians 2: 12-14, ***“Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he (Peter) began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all. You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it then that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”*** There follows now an extended explanation of the righteousness by faith for Jew and Gentile. For Paul, the truth of the Gospel was again at stake and that is why he corrected Peter publicly. It is interesting that Peter never complained about the correction, because deep in his heart he knew that Paul was right and that it was fear, which came over him. Peter was the first one who received the vision in the book of Acts that God has now cleansed the unclean animals. By revelation Paul understood

the mystery of the unity of the body of Christ and he united in his person both parts, which belong to the Bride of Jesus. James and the church in Jerusalem could not fully understand Paul at this time because he said in Acts 21: 21, ***“but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.”***

The church in Jerusalem and in the nations, was not only locally separated, but also differed in their identity and expression. The revelation of the mystery of the church and the unity in Yeshua lived in the heart of Paul, but was neither visible nor lived out in the church in Jerusalem. This was a special challenge for the church in Jerusalem. Whenever the kingdom of God is manifesting, the spirit is in opposition to it, and manifests also. When Yeshua appeared, Demons could not be quiet. If we have a certain authority in one area of conflict, the powers of darkness are usually revealed.

Paul had authority to confront religious spirits that had a special stronghold in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is also, in our days, the center of the three world religions. Paul was in many ways ahead of the church in Jerusalem and the nations as an untimely birth. Paul says about himself: 1 Corinthians 15: 8, ***“And last of all He appeared to me also, as to one born out of due time.”*** On the one hand, he was late because he was not one of the twelve disciples who walked with Yeshua. On the other hand, he was early, because he got some very deep

prophetic revelation from the Lord, which at this time, the biggest part of the church could not understand. Already at that time he got the revelation about this Gospel of grace, bringing Jew and Gentile together in the love of the Lord. One day there won't be different churches and denominations, but one united visible body of Christ made up of Jew and Gentile.

The church in the nations also missed the revelation that Paul received. Over the centuries they did not understand God's faithfulness and love to His covenant people Israel. In Christ, the Gentiles became co-heirs with Israel but did not replace Israel. Ephesians 3: 6, ***“that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.”*** Gentile believers are not the only heirs or owners, but together with the Jewish people are grafted into the one olive tree, Israel. Paul did warn the believers from the Nations not to be proud. Romans 11: 18, ***“Do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: you do not support the root, but the root supports you.”*** Right after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in the year 70 after Christ this very thing happened. Some Gentile believers saw in it the judgment of the Lord and a confirmation, that God had forever rejected the Jewish people.

The Gentile Church was growing very fast, and as a result, pride crept into the Gentile Church. The church in the nations did not understand why it was so important for Paul

to go first to Jerusalem and to be a testimony for the gospel of grace there.

Since Paul was already in Asia it would be much more practical to go first to Rome and then to Jerusalem. And why did he want to go to Jerusalem, if they would persecute him there, put him in chains, and make him suffer? If the church in the nations had understood their tremendous responsibility to fight in their prayers for the deliverance of Paul, I believe the outcome could have been different. I don't know if they arranged for special prayer nights, beside their weekly program, to pray for the deliverance of Paul. Paul believed that they could have saved him from the hands of unbelievers in Judea, like the church in Jerusalem prayed successfully for the deliverance of Peter.

What we do know is that Paul never got to Rome in joy, but only in chains. He knew that he needed to come to Rome anyhow, because Jesus had told him. Coming in freedom or in chains was, according to his conviction, dependent on the prayer battle of the believers in the Nations for him and for the gospel of grace. As Paul defended himself on the Temple Mount, they listened to him, until he said one particular sentence. Acts 22: 21-22, ***“Then he (Yeshua) said to me, depart for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles. And they listened to him until this word and then they raised their voices and said, away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!”*** They listened to his testimony of the heavenly revelation of Yeshua, his baptism and how God forgave him

his sin. But they could not receive the next word. In the spiritual world, there was great resistance as Paul indicated that he was sent from God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The message that the Gospel for Jew and Gentile alike was rejected.

If we look at the word “mystery”, we find that this word is mentioned mostly in Paul’s letters. In the book of Daniel, we see the word mystery in connection with the kingdom of God. The word mystery is mentioned in connection with the mystery of God, the mystery of Christ, the mystery of the Church, the mystery of the gospel and the mystery of the Body of Christ. Paul describes the relationship and unity of believers from the Nations with the Jewish believers also as a mystery. Living out the reality of this truth will be an important testimony for the visible and invisible world. Paul uses the word “mystery” very often in his letter to the Ephesians as he speaks about the unity between Jews and Gentiles for which Yeshua died. Ephesians 3: 4-10, ***“You have heard...how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from***

the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.”

In these verses, we see that Paul relates this mystery of the unity between Jew and Gentile to the gospel. A little later Paul speaks about the mystery of the unity between man and woman in marriage and changes the subject spontaneously. Ephesians 5: 32, ***“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”*** He sees marriage as a foreshadowing of the unity which Christ will have with his bridal Church. Paul had not only the heart of the bride but also the heart of the bridegroom, Yeshua, for the whole body of Christ. In the end, it will be one visible entity, the one united and prepared bridal Church. I don't think that there was anyone else who understood this mystery deeply as Paul did, and carried it in his heart. Paul is like an incarnation of this mystery of the gospel of grace. He embodies this unity and it is his life, his gospel for which he is ready to live and to die.

He also uses the word mystery in the letter to the Romans. Romans 11: 25-26, ***“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so, all Israel will be saved, as it is written.”*** God's end time plan for Israel is a mystery for him, and we will see it fulfilled as the time of the Gentiles comes to an end. The center of the mystery is Christ

Himself, and this is why he writes in Colossians 2: 2, ***“Being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ.”*** Or in Colossians 1: 27: ***“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*** Only in Christ Jesus is this unity between Jews and Gentiles possible, and only in Him do we come into the unity of which Paul is speaking in his letters.

To describe it in a picture it is like Yeshua is waiting for us on a mountaintop and calling the Jewish believers, and believers from the nations, to Himself. In His presence, we enter into real unity, which is only available in Him. He called Jerusalem to himself with the words: Luke 13: 34 ***“How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”*** Any other unity we achieve in our own power, or in a spirit of humanism between messianic Jews and Christians from different Nations and denominations, is like stopping half way before really reaching the top of the mountain. We miss the depths and purpose God has given and we all need to be careful not to build outside of the Spirit of Christ. Our own effort misses out the God-given purpose and call.

Today there is recognition by Christians of Jewish Traditions and an acceptance of Judaism, which sometimes stays on a humanistic level. We read about the word mystery in Revelation 10: 7, ***“but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God***

would be finished, as He declared to his servants the prophets.

My question is, could it be that God is talking about the same mystery in the book of Revelation, which Paul already understood? Does this relate to the mystery of Yeshua and the unity of Jew and Gentile in His Bridle End Time Church?

The book of Revelation gives another picture for the bride, the heavenly Jerusalem. Revelation 21: 2, ***“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”*** This unity is completed and fulfilled in the Jerusalem from heaven. In our time, we often look for special revelations and prophecies. How wonderful it would be if the greatest mystery and fulfillment of prophecy were the unity between Jew and Gentile, as His prepared bride. I believe, because of the terrible Church history among the Jewish people, it will need a creative act of the Lord to bring these two parts together.

If someone is very distorted through sickness, then we need to pray for a creative miracle of the Lord, as we see it in the healing of the man who was born blind. After he received his healing, he could see for the first time. In the New Testament, we read only in the letter to the Ephesians, that the word “create” is related to Jesus. Ephesians 2:15, ***“His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.”*** We do have the ability and opportunity, as individuals, to live in this new creation, even if the whole body of Christ, made up from Jew and Gentile, is not living it

out together in our days. However, Paul is calling everyone to live already in this spiritual reality.

Galatians 6: 15-16, ***“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”*** This mystery and the call related to Paul have been neglected after his death. As believers from the Jews and from the Nations we need to get back and pray for this mystery to be fulfilled today, which is related to the testimony of Paul. My conviction is that with the imprisonment of Paul his gospel was also chained to a certain extent and never fully released. The world has not seen in the last 2000 years this unity between Jew and Gentile in the Church, which was, and is, God’s intention. Therefore, Paul writes in Ephesians 3: 10, ***“his intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.”*** Not only did the world fail to see this unity in Christ, but sadly saw also its opposite inside the Churches and in their behavior towards the Jews. Instead of helping the Jewish people to remove their own veil that Paul was talking about, the church in the Nation's put more veils on them, and made it even more difficult to recognize the Messiah in Yeshua. Paul knows that he is called to be a herald, apostle and teacher of the gospel. 2 Tim. 1:11, ***“And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.”*** He talks about his gospel, which he received by revelation. Galatians 1:11-12, ***“But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached***

by me is not according to man. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

What does he mean by his gospel that he received by revelation? We usually connect with the word gospel, only the message of an evangelist who is explaining the first steps of faith. But in fact, Paul did not learn about the first steps of faith in supernatural revelation, but from Ananias. Acts 22:13 and 16: ***“Ananias came to me; and he stood and said to me, Brother Saul receive your sight. And at that same hour I looked up at him. Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*** Which part of the gospel is Paul then talking about? 2 Timothy 2:8-9, ***“Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains”***, or 2 Timothy 1: 8, ***“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God.”***

The gospel of grace Paul received and was preaching is so important and central for a believer, that he writes to the Church in Rome: Romans 2: 16, ***“...in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.”*** I do not think that Paul is going too far, but that he knew, and was convinced, that the gospel of grace is the plum line for the final judgment of Yeshua our Messiah. This gospel is dealing with our heart attitude, with the secrets of men, and not only with religious laws. The unity between believers made out of Jews and Gentiles is a very important part to

Paul in the gospel. Therefore, it is written in the Gospel of John 11: 51-52, ***“He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.”***

Yeshua died on the cross for this unity between the believers out of Jews and Gentile and it is an important part of the salvation. The salvation of our Lord is not only for our sins, but also for the unity to be lived out in a real way. If the church would understand the importance of these truths and how important it is for our Messiah Yeshua and for our Father in Heaven, big changes would take place in the world-wide church. Therefore, it is also written in John 10: 16, ***“I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”*** It is high time for the church to change her priorities and live in the reality of this unity, since the Lord died for it a long time ago.

As Paul was put in chains, his gospel and task were chained to a certain degree. He could not come with joy to Rome, but only in chains and as far as we know he was not able to go to Spain as he had planned. My question is, ‘is it possible that since Paul was imprisoned and executed, that with him the call to bring the gospel of grace to Jerusalem has never been totally released again? Has this mystery of the unity between Jew and Gentile ever become important in the church in Jerusalem and the Nations? Have there been believers, who have taken this to their hearts like Paul, to

bring the gospel of grace to Jerusalem? Did we take up the prayer request of Paul in Romans 15 to pray for a breakthrough in Jerusalem? Which way could the church have gone if the root of all racism and anti-Semitism had been confronted and disarmed right in the beginning of the church history?

Maybe the divisions into many denominations could have been avoided, if this part of the gospel had been understood and lived out. Will we really see revival, if we do not live out this unity, especially in Jerusalem?

I think all of this is a part of why the spiritual battle in Jerusalem is so strong. The house of the Lord in Jerusalem is supposed to be a house of prayer for all Nations. (Mark 11: 17) Paul was a representative of the gospel of grace and therefore his coming to Jerusalem was prophetic. He is like an incarnation of the bride because in a very deep way he carries the love for both parts of mankind, Jew and Gentile, in his heart. He knows about the mystery of God in Christ, about the bride of Christ, the one church. The mystery of the end time is not hidden from him. Paul understands that believers among the Jews and from the Nations have access to the same grace and that he lived it out, but he was chained for it. Ephesians 6: 18- 20, ***“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly***

to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.

The chains were put on Paul in Jerusalem although he had asked the church in Rome to pray for him that this would not happen. Could it be that the church in the Nations still has a call to pray for the release of the gospel of grace especially in Jerusalem? We want to see the release of this a reality, which Paul already understood in his time.

With these thoughts about Paul, I just want to encourage you to pray even more fervently for the peace of Jerusalem which will not come without the Prince of Peace, Yeshua. May He give us more light and revelation, that we may know how to stand with Jerusalem and Israel and with our Nations today.

I would like to add some thoughts from Christoph Blumhart, who was a Lutheran pastor in Germany in the last century, about the restoration of love and truth in the church. We read in Mark 1: 16-18, ***“And as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of man. They immediately left their nets and followed Him.”*** Yeshua is making a connection from the former work of Peter, a fisherman, to his future call to be a fisher of man. It is interesting that in the next verses 19 to 20 is written: ***“When he had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in a boat, mending***

their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.” As Jesus makes a connection with Peter and Andrew to their former occupation, in the same way there is a connection to the former work of John and James. The Lord did not call them in the first place to be evangelists, but to mend the nets. What is the ministry of mending the nets? In the first centuries, the nets of love and truth were torn inside the church, as it is written in Luke 5, 6 ***“And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.”*** It means that people who did belong to Jesus could be outside of the church and people who did not belong to Him could be inside of the church. Love can’t be at the expense of truth and nor can truth be at the expense of love. To tell someone the truth without love often leads to the fact that truth is not received because of the lack of love it came with. But not to tell the truth out of so-called love, is also not love in the light of the word of God. The net, which consisted of the love and truth coming from God, was torn and now the Lord is calling for ‘menders of nets in His service’ to repair the net and bring it into His original condition. If the net is full of holes you can’t really catch fish because they will get out of the net and are lost very easily. The last great catch of fish, being the worldwide evangelization, can’t take place with a torn net. Before the great catch the net needs to be restored to the brethren in Israel.

The last great catch of fish from a prophetic point is still ahead of us and is described in John 21: 11, ***“Simon Peter***

went up aboard and dragged the net to land full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.” I do believe that we will not see revival or world-wide evangelization without the restoration of our rightful relationship between Israel and the Church. The roots of our faith are in Israel and Jerusalem, like Paul writes in Romans 11. Derek Prince said once in regards to Israel and the Church: “If someone does not get the first shirt button right, he will also not have the other buttons in the right place”.

Christa Behr

Paul and his understanding of repentance

Paul was a murderer, because he was responsible for the death of the first martyr Steven. As he came to know the Lord, his life was totally changed through the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. (Acts 9) Without any fear of men he was preaching the gospel immediately in Damascus and in Jerusalem. His testimony is founded on a deep understanding and revelation of the gospel of grace. (Acts 20) He never forgot where he came from and he wrote much later: 1 Corinthians 15: 9 ***“For I am the least of the apostles, who is not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”*** He does not stop there. Immediately there is coming a “but” in 10a: ***“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain.”***

Jesus is calling us to repent and He is expecting the fruits of our repentance. Luke 3, 8 ***“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”*** As Paul is questioned and attacked in his ministry as an apostle, he defends himself and does not give in. He understood the grace of God in a deep way and he became active in the right direction. Therefore, he could say: 1 Corinthians 15:10b ***“but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”***

After Paul’s conversion he was hiding himself for some years and it was a time of quietness. He said that he was in Arabia (Galatians 1,17) and mount Sinai, which is in Arabia (Gal 4: 25) and it could be that he received revelation of the gospel of grace at Mount Sinai, the mountain where God gave the law. However, there is no one who understood the grace of God in depths like Paul did. Some people are afraid that if they start to deal with repentance they will fall into a pit of sadness and never get out of it again. But if we look at the life of Paul, we see how fulfilled his life was. It was not easy but very fruitful.

If we identify ourselves in repentance with the sins of our people we enter into a process. Sins committed by the whole nation need to be brought before the Lord in prayer by many people. Sometimes it takes years before a whole group is willing to respond to a national sin and a little group can open the doors for further steps. Later on we find out more information about our national sin in history and we can go deeper in repentance. Because, in a human way, we cannot do anything about the sins of our nation, we are totally depending on the leading of the Lord.

There are wonderful testimonies of how the Lord answered those prayers. It is not always good to make it public in newsletters, but before the Lord everything is open and He takes note of every hidden prayer. We pray that more people will respond to this priestly calling and that we get more insight and understanding.

Christa Behr

The story of Joseph and his brothers

For sure, already many believers have been writing about the story of Joseph and his brothers. Benjamin Berger from Jerusalem wrote a booklet about this story with photos of the sculptures in his garden made by Rick Wienecke.

I want to emphasize especially the responsibility of believers from the nations concerning Israel. Therefore, I would like to add some thoughts hoping that they are helpful.

The story about Joseph and his brothers reflects, and explains, the relationship between Israel and the Church in the nations, and how the God of Israel is bringing us together. Joseph is foreshadowing the Messiah, because he was sent ahead of his brothers for the great salvation (Gen. 45,5).

Joseph became a blessing for the nations in a wonderful way. Gen. 39,5 tells us: ***“So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field.”***

Father Jacob had a special relationship to his son Joseph, because he was the son of Rachel, his beloved wife, who had not been able to conceive a child for a very long time. However, his love for Joseph was not only rooted in emotions. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that a special calling was upon his son’s life. This was the reason why he gave Joseph a beautiful striped garment. But his brothers could not see anything special in Joseph. They considered him to be an arrogant dreamer and were jealous and it was obvious that their father preferred their brother Joseph. When they heard his dreams, they had not been able

to recognize them as a prophetic message. In his dreams they only saw the confirmation of a proud attitude. Father Jacob and Joseph's brothers could not immediately recognize what the God of Israel was communicating.

Joseph reports that he has been kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews: Gen. 40, 15 ***"I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews in the first place, and even here I have done nothing to warrant being put in the dungeon"***. In Replacement Theology Yeshua is also stolen away from the Jewish people and has become an Egyptian (a Gentile).

According to the so-called Replacement Theology the Church of the Nations took over the promises originally given to the people of Israel and irreversibly replaced her as the chosen nation of God. Jesus, the king of the Jews, has been recognized among the nations as their redeemer during the last 2000 years, while the Jewish people forgot about him. Unfortunately, among the nations Jesus almost lost his Jewish identity. They gave him a new identity according to their Gentile tradition. During the last centuries the Jewish roots of Yeshua and his identity were denied. As a result, anti-Semitism and racism entered the Church.

Joseph had to spend a long time in prison. Genesis 40, 23: ***"But the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him"***. But when the hour of restoration comes, it can come very quickly. Genesis: 41, 14 ***"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon"***.

Joseph had been put in a place of authority, as he was thirty years old. Gen. 41, 46: ***"Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt."*** Jesus also was thirty years old when he began to minister in public. And Pharaoh said to Joseph in Genesis 41, 41: ***"See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."***

Joseph married and the Lord gave him two sons. Gen. 41,51: ***"Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh and said "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house."*** His second son he

called Ephraim. Gen. 41, 52: ***“And the name of the second he called Ephraim: For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”***

One day his brothers came to Joseph in Egypt, for there was a big famine in the land of Canaan. Joseph recognized his brothers immediately, but they did not recognize him. So it is today. Jesus recognizes his people, but they do not recognize Him. Joseph did not want to reveal himself to his brothers and therefore he spoke through a translator. He needed to test them first to see whether their hearts attitude had changed: Gen. 42, 16-17 ***“Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies! He put them all together in prison three days.”***

During their stay in prison the ten brothers said to one another: Gen. 42, 21 ***“We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore, this distress has come upon us.”***

God used this difficult situation and the way Joseph treated his brothers to bring a deep change in the brothers' hearts. All these years they have had a bad conscience. Joseph indeed acted according to the Spirit of God. He treats his brothers hard, for he knows that God intends to change something inside of them. The hard treatment caused them to think about their deeds of the past. In prison the brothers became aware how much they had sinned against their brother Joseph. Difficult times can cause us to repent as well, as we think about our life and we will become aware of what went wrong.

Joseph wept because he still loved his brothers. Yet, he could not spare them from this experience. In front of their eyes, Simeon, their brother, was bound and set captive. Again, he urged them not to come back without their youngest brother Benjamin, and said: Gen. 44,23 ***“Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.”*** If we imagine that Benjamin was Joseph's only brother with whom

he shared the same mother, we might understand better the special relationship between the two of them.

As we compare the church of the nations with Joseph's ten brothers, and at the same time Benjamin with the Jewish people, then we can see the scripture above in a different light. Jesus is a Jew and has also a special relationship to his brothers in the flesh like the youngest brother, Benjamin.

I am convinced that we as the church of the nations will not really see our Lord Jesus without our little brother Benjamin. Our plans for the unity between the denominations in the church and world-evangelisation will not really succeed, if we come before the Lord without our brother Benjamin, the Jewish people.

Joseph made it quite simple for his brothers to betray Benjamin as well. He checked if they were still dominated by jealousy. Joseph invited all the brothers to a meal and they were seated according to their age. The brothers wondered how it was possible that Joseph knew their age. Benjamin was sitting at his right hand, because his name means: "Son of my right hand". Benjamin also received five portions of food while the other brothers only got one. After that Joseph put his precious cup into Benjamin's sack of grain. As they were already on their way home, he sent his servant and he said: Gen. 44, 17 ***"The man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave..."*** If the brothers' hearts had not changed, it would have been easy to make up another story, for example that Benjamin was slain by a bear. But what happened? Judah remembers the words of his father Jacob before he left. Gen. 44,29 ***"But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him you shall bring down my grey hair with sorrow to the grave."***

Judah answered: Gen. 44, 30–34 ***"Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So, your servants will bring down the grey hair of your servant our***

farther with sorrow to the grave. For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, "If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever. "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

Although Judah clearly recognized that his father's heart was bound to his brother Benjamin, this time he comes to a different conclusion: He could not bear to see the misery that would overwhelm his father. All these years the brothers saw his suffering after the loss of his son Joseph. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. There is something special in Judah's character. Only after he offered to take responsibility for the secure return of Benjamin, the father Jacob agrees to let him go with the brothers. Judah volunteers to take care of Benjamin and therefore he offers to become a slave and enter the prison instead of Benjamin.

In this very moment Joseph cannot hold back any longer and starts to cry loudly. He reveals himself as their brother when he saw Judah's attitude towards his younger brother Benjamin. The moment of revelation came when Judah was ready to give his life for his younger brother: Gen. 45, 1-5 *"Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out: "Make every one go out from me!" So, no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it." Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, "please come near to me." So, they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life."*

When the church of the nations is willing to stand up for Israel, Jesus will reveal himself and come for His bride. The bride has to make herself ready for the bridegroom. Jesus has only one bride and when they are united, she has made herself ready. When Jew and Gentile are

reconciled in their Messiah the mystery of God is fulfilled and the Lord will reveal Himself to Israel and the whole world.

Finally, after all these years, everything came into the light that had afflicted their relationship. The father, Jacob, never really trusted his ten sons again. Gen. 37, 35b ***“..but he refused to be comforted”***. Deep in his heart Jacob knew that his sons never told him the truth about Joseph’s disappearance. Only when the church from the nations put their relationship with Israel in order, will the relationship to Joseph (Jesus Christ) and to the father Jacob (our Father in Heaven) be restored completely.

Looking back, Joseph can say: Gen. 50, 20 ***“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”***

Christa Behr

Jerusalem's history and her future in the Bible

The first time we find the city of Jerusalem in the Bible is in Genesis 14, 18: ***Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High***. Salem is the word for Jerusalem and means the "Peace". The word Shalom and Shalem is in the word Jerusalem. In Hebrew: Jerushalaim. Shalom means peace and Shalem means completion. The word Melchizedek means: "King of Righteousness". In the letter of the Hebrews we read that Jesus is the real King of Righteousness and Melchizedek is already pointing to our Lord Yeshua.

The second time we find Jerusalem mentioned is in Genesis 22, 2: ***go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there***. Jerusalem was the place where Abraham was led to offer his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice to the Lord. But the angel of the Lord hindered him in the very last moment to do so and Abraham understood that the Lord sees, because the word Moriah is related to the word in Hebrew "lirot" to see. The Lord sees ahead and HE is providing the true Lamb of God in Jerusalem at a later point of time: His only Son Yeshua as a perfect sacrifice for the sin of all mankind. Genesis 22, 14: ***And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day***.

On this mountain David saw the angel of destruction after he sinned against the Lord by counting the men ready to go to war in Israel. In 1. Chronicles 21, 51 it is written that there were one million, one hundred thousand men available. The disaster over Israel was stopped by the Lord and He called David to build an altar on the place which became later the Temple Mount.

1.Chronicles 21, 18: ***“Therefore the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite”.***

The “Temple Mount” is Mount Moriah and exactly on this place King Solomon had built the temple of the Lord. 2. Chronicles 3, 1: ***“Then Salomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on the Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David”.***

King David reigned for 33 years in Jerusalem. 2. Samuel 5, 5 b: ***“In Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah”.*** In the book of Isaiah, the whole 54th chapter is about Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the barren woman and she will have many children. Isaiah 54,1: ***“Sing O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband, says the LORD”.***

According to Isaiah 66, 7-11 Jerusalem is like a woman and the people will be comforted on her breasts: ***“Before she was in labour, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labour, she gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?’ says the Lord. Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?’ says your God. Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; That you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom, that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory”.***

The prophet Ezekiel calls Jerusalem an unfaithful woman. God made a covenant with her but the city of Jerusalem gets involved in prostitution. Ezekiel 16, 15: ***“But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute”.***

We read about Jerusalem in the New Testament too. Mary, the mother of Jesus received a promise, which was not fulfilled at the first coming of the Lord. Only at his second coming he will rule and reign

from the throne of David. Luke 1, 32: ***“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end”***. The Temple Mount could be the throne of King David, because Jesus is riding into the city as a humble King on a donkey. He goes straight to the Temple Mount and looks around, as if He would say: It is the place but not yet the time. Mark 11, 11: ***“And Jesus went into Jerusalem and went into the temple. So, when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve”***.

Jerusalem is the Throne of the Lord on the earth in a very specific sense: it is Jacob's ladder connecting heaven and earth when the gospel returns to Israel; it is the throne of God – the Messiah Yeshua – which will be re-established like it is written in Jeremiah 3, 17: ***“At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord to Jerusalem”***. The same thing is confirmed in Ezekiel 43, 7: ***“And He said to me, Son of Man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings...”***

The Apostle Paul is comparing the earthly Jerusalem to a slave woman, and the Jerusalem from above to Abraham's wife Sara in Galatians 4, 25-28: ***“Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: ‘Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband’. Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise”***. Jerusalem is related to the supernatural intervention of the Lord. God wants to pour out His Spirit over Jerusalem again and also His spirit of prayer and supplication.

In the year 1967 Jerusalem was re-united for the first time in more than 2000 years under the sovereignty of “Judah” (the Jews). It was also then that the modern messianic movement was born. This was the mighty move of God in the miraculous 6-day war. In the spiritual realm,

the time of the gentiles was fulfilled as it is written in Luke 21, 24: ***“And Jerusalem will be trampled by the gentiles until the times of the gentiles are fulfilled”***. When the time of the gentiles comes to an end all the believers have to recognize that the God of Israel, our Father in Yeshua the Messiah, has turned His attention back to His first covenant people. That means also that we, as the Church of the nations, cannot any longer make our plans without paying attention to God’s sovereign move with His first covenant people. If we do not understand God’s plan with Israel we could find ourselves in the midst of the deceived nations mentioned in Zechariah 12, 2-3 and 12, 2: ***“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it”***.

You can read about the same thing also in Zechariah chapter 14. But this time Israel is in the land and though the battles will be great, it is only for a limited time. The prophetic word will go forth at that time. After all this, the people who are left will come and worship in Jerusalem and celebrate the last harvest feast, the Feast of Tabernacles as it is written in Zechariah 14, 16: ***“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles”***.

Finally, we see Jerusalem as the heavenly bride of Christ in the Book of Revelation 21.2: ***“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”***. Revelations 21, 3: ***“All sufferings had come to an end because the goal is reached. He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God”***.

Christa Behr

The spiritual roots of the Holocaust

– by Jakob Krämer

I prefer the term “shoa” because it better describes “the indescribable”. “Holocaust” can be translated with “complete burnt offering” and that might invoke certain positive associations. On the other hand, “shoa” means something like demolition – catastrophe – destruction. The shoa is the dramatic experience of the Jewish people, which became the omnipresent national trauma of Israel.

We must understand that or we will not understand anything about Israel. Once I gave a lecture and afterwards I was approached by a young man who was visibly excited and said: “If you mention the 6 million Jews who have been killed during the Holocaust, then you also have to talk about the millions of dead who have been killed by Stalin and Mao.”

This young man has not yet understood anything about the mystery of Israel, which together with the mystery of Christ belongs to the greatest mysteries of the bible. Whereas one of those mysteries helps to understand the other one. The more you try to separate the two, the more they blur into each other. It is purely by God’s grace and not by our understanding, that we are allowed to understand small pieces of it – it is really only partially.

In the context of the millennium-long persecution of the Jews and the Jewish people worldwide I would like to closely examine the spiritual roots and the spiritual background which gave a basis to the Holocaust.

The shoa is the biggest atrocity ever committed against the Jewish people, it is the mega tsunami of sorrow, which befell this people in the 20th century. The preliminary quakes took place over the last 3200 years and have been recorded both in the bible as well as by historians. These preliminary quakes happened at many locations and during various times.

The earth has not yet quieted down and there are still after-quakes! And there is no telling when those that haven't yet erupted will erupt.

In trying to find an answer for the cause of the Holocaust. I will therefore not confine myself to the 20th century and "National Socialism". It is a well-known rule that "the particular will be understood by studying the general."

It wasn't only Jews who were killed at Mauthausen; even so, Mauthausen in Austria is representing the great number of concentration camps where Jewish people were killed. When people entered the concentration camps of the National Socialists, they looked death in the face – and Jews were confronted with a certain death. Why particularly the Jews?

A short extract from Theodor Herzl's book *The Jewish State* says: "We have honestly tried to assimilate with the group of people surrounding us and keep apart purely by keeping the faith of our fathers. But it is not to be permitted. It makes no difference that we are loyal, and in some cases even enthusiastic patriots, and it is in vain that we try to increase the honour of our chosen homeland with art and scientific feats and to increase their wealth through commerce and travel. In our chosen homelands, in which we lived for centuries, we are treated and shouted at like foreigners, often by those whose ancestors were not yet even in this country, when our fathers lived in it with sighing and moaning. The majority decide who is the foreigner; it is a question of power." These lines, written by Herzl, confirm that which is known by many, but they do not provide any answer for the question of "why?".

What have we done wrong? What are we doing wrong today? Why are we the only people of this world, which has been persecuted from the beginning of our existence and has never been accepted or considered to be equal by the rest of the world?

At the time when Herzl wrote these lines, he lived in the fantasy of believing that all this would change if the Jewish people would have their own state. Has anything changed? Today there is a Jewish state. As a consequence of it, anti-Zionism has been added to anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism. There are a number of questions about the history of the Jewish people, which virtually force themselves upon us:

Why were the new-born boys of the Hebrews slaughtered upon the order of the pharaoh? What did those boys do wrong? Or – who felt threatened by their existence? Who was the true target behind that?

Why did Amalek desire to destroy the Israelites and to keep them from entering the Holy Land? What was the true reason? Who was truly meant to be hurt by that?

Why was it that the Persian Haman wanted to kill all Jews within the Persian Empire, which stretched all the way from India to Greece? Why is it that today the Persian Ahmadinejad wishes to wipe out Israel?

Why were the children of Bethlehem killed? By the way – Herod was not a Jew but an Idumean, a descendant of Esau. Whom were they threatening? In whose place did they have to die?

Does the horrific answer, which is known by us all, have to be continued throughout all of the centuries of persecution of the Jewish people? It takes one's breath away.

Why was it that during the crusades, during the time of the Spanish inquisition, the Jews were persecuted and either killed or forced to give up their Jewish identity, their affiliation with the people of Israel?

Why is it that over centuries whole areas within the Pogroms of Eastern Europe and Russia were “cleansed of Jews” through Pogroms, their murderers traveling from village to village, sacking and pillaging, murdering women, children, the young and the old?

Why then did the unthinkable finally happen, that which is referred to today by historians as the Holocaust? An unbelievable, gruesome drama which cost 6 Million Jews their lives, among them 1.5 Million children. What did they do wrong, after all? Or who was really meant to be the target of all that? When our children ask, what answer are we going to give them? Why were they truly killed? Only because they were Jews? That in itself cannot be the reason. But one dares not to think any further, for fear of staring into the gorge of hell itself.

The explanations, the answers for the great why, provided by sociologists, political scientists, historians and religious scientists are well known. Even so, they are usually too cheap, too superficial, not truly convincing and satisfying.

For in the end all their explanations feed the ever-present latent suspicion: "Somehow it's their own fault. If they were different, all that would not have happened to them!" Whereas no one is really capable of explaining what that "otherness" is actually supposed to be.

A pinnacle of ignorance is the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. (A malicious pamphlet, a pure fabrication created by the Russian secret service which supposedly exposed the "true results and objectives" of the Zionist congress of Basel in 1897. Today it is a bestseller in the Arab Islamic world).

The Why of the persecution of the Jewish people demands a "Therefore" which makes sense, even if it appears to be total madness.

In Shma Israel the one God reveals himself to his people and at the same time calls them to witness. Deut. 6:4-9. "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today.

Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

It’s even clearer in Isaiah. 43:10-12 – “But you are my witnesses, O Israel! Says the Lord. And you are my servant. You have been chosen to know me, believe in me, and understand that I alone am God. There is no other God; there never has been and never will be. I am the Lord, and there is no other Saviour. First, I predicted your deliverance; I declared what I would do, and then I did it – I saved you. No foreign god has ever done this before. You are witnesses that I am the only God, says the Lord.”

I will try to find the “Therefore” to answer the “why”. An answer, which does not claim to be an all-encompassing one!

But nevertheless, an answer which allows us to comprehend more deeply the mystery that is Israel. Even so, it requires the grace of God’s revelation in order for us to be able to understand with our heart. That is what we have to pray for, because it’s a mystery, which will only be revealed to the praying person. Personally, I am convinced that Hitler and National Socialism were “created” for one single purpose. Apart from all the other atrocities which have been caused by them, namely to continue that which the others before them have not yet succeeded in doing. And that is to destroy the Jewish people, the people which for all time have been and will be the ones chosen by God. To destroy them in order to destroy the witness of the One and Only God. The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, who is our God too.

Israel is the witness of this One God, and Israel will remain witness of this one God. As long as the one who testifies lives, the testimony will live as well.

I am absolutely convinced that the true motive for any anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism and anti-Zionism lies in this ongoing chosen-ness of Israel by a sovereign God! However, this motive remains well hidden and disguised, and is therefore an occult motive. Anti-Semitism – anti-Judaism

– anti-Zionism is a form of occultism! Ignorance of this motive, or denying it, will not change the factuality of this occultism. For the one who rejects the chosen ones simultaneously rejects the one who has chosen!

By discriminating against the one who has been chosen he denies the one God who has the right of free choice. By doing that he has created his own God, he has made his own image of God and has in fact broken the first commandment! And what makes it worse is that he isn't even aware of the fact that he is worshipping an image of God. He can, in fact, give this image the name of Jesus. But this image will never result in the Jesus as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. Because it is impossible to reject the one who has been chosen without, at the same time, rejecting the one who has done the choosing. That is the sad story of the Christian churches!

God neither limits the witness by time, nor does take Israel's ability to act as a witness dependent upon circumstances or upon the "spiritual and moral condition" of this people! Simply by the power of its existence, which is solely based on the unique selection by God, as witness of this One God. If you can accept it as that, it is the witness par excellence. Even if Israel has failed many times and has broken the covenant, Israel nevertheless is and remains the witness and God's firstborn. God's mercy wins over God's anger over Israel's sin. That has to do with God's faithfulness and his love, with his decisions and promises.

Where would we be, where would the Christian Church of the nation's stand, if we would not accept this standard as God's general standard towards His people? And Israel is His people! If this witness were not to exist any longer, then that which it gives witness to would not exist any longer! Deuteronomic 28:10 "Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the Lord ...". Therefore, anti-Semitism exists among all nations!!! How then would the nations recognize the name of the Lord God if Israel no longer existed? Looking at Israel we recognize who and what God is.

Can the Christian church replace that which is being witnessed? Can it replace this witness?

Can it? Is that even intended by God?

The church can neither replace Israel as the witness, nor that which is being witnessed, but she can and shall complement it. That is what Paul meant in the letter to the Ephesians when he said in 2:14: "He is our peace who has unified the two".

What God intended are two witnesses who are unified and who, in this unity, give witness to Him, but at the same time retain their own nature, individuality and uniqueness. (Could it be that those are the two witnesses who are referred to in Revelation 11?)

However, the church from nations is only able to be a true witness of the one God if she: Acknowledges the ongoing position of Israel as a witness; If she's committed to this witness and identifies with Israel's position as a witness; Accepts the necessary consequences of commitment on that basis! Loves this witness, simply because Israel is also loved by God.

If the church from the nations fails to do that – and in the past she has often done exactly the opposite – she cannot be a believable witness for Jesus Christ, who is the true son of Israel.

Jesus and Israel cannot be separated without distorting both their countenances! He is the fulfilment of Israel; in Him all the promises given to Israel have been fulfilled. (Rom 9:1-5) In a way, Jesus is Israel's forerunner towards the goal. Because he reached the goal, all of Israel will reach it too. (Rom 11:26) Israel was not only God's witness up to the first coming of Jesus, but will be a witness until his second coming – until the whole plan of salvation has been fulfilled!!!

Israel did not offer, of her own accord, to be God's witness! Israel has been created by God for that specific purpose. It is the basic reason for its existence! Israel is the sole nation in this world, which has been created by God. The existence of this witness – elected and destined to be a witness for this world, to give witness of this one God, and this is the one and true reason of any kind of persecution of the Jewish people.

It is the true reason for all persecution of the Jewish people and the true reason for the animosity towards the Jewish state. Many Christians don't really know what to make of the Jewish state. However, this secular state of Israel is not yet the end product of God's promise! It is the raw product; which God will shape into the final product!

We have to align ourselves with this flawed beginning because it is the true raw material called into existence by God! For the church, this must be an integral part of being a witness. Both the Jewish people, as well as the Jewish institutions are as sinful as the rest of the world!

Even so, on that memorable night at the Jabbok, where God transformed the human Jacob into Israel, the prince of God, right when Jacob met Jesus, so also in the same way God will transform the Israel of today, which still possesses the nature of Jacob---so that it will be transformed into that final form intended and foretold by God. And he is already in the middle of revealing himself to Israel!

Only by a revelation and realisation of Jesus will Israel take on its intended form. It will happen as described in Zechariah 12:10: ***“They will look on me whom they have pierced ...”***. This is already happening. Israel is in the middle of a process of change. This process is causing pain both to Israel as well as to God. This becomes clear when we read Ps. 22 and Is. 53. But it is not normal pain because they are birth pains. These pains point towards something incredible, which will be “life for those who were dead” (Romans 11:15).

It was intended to cause pain to the Christian church as well, as we are created out of Israel! As we are part of Israel. Instead it is us, the Christian church, which has caused pain to Israel throughout all of history, right into our present time. By doing that, it also caused pain to God and to itself.

So, what is the spiritual cause for the Holocaust? The true reason for it? What is the purpose behind Auschwitz and Mauthausen? For, if there is no purpose behind it, if it is nothing but a coincidence, or could be explained purely on the basis of inner-worldly explanations, I would consider myself completely deceived in my understanding of God.

Who was the true target for it? What truly was meant to be achieved or avoided? The answer is right before our eyes, and by God’s grace we can perceive it: “In the end it was God himself who was the target; He was meant to be done away with”. However, because God is in heaven while his witness is here on earth, again and again it will always be the witness who will become the target.

But it is also the church in the nations, which has become a target, even though they have been largely blind to it, and still are! Whenever Jews have been persecuted or are being persecuted, the church becomes the target for the enemy. The enemy has good reasons to conceal this and it is his best-kept secret.

This church, up until now, has done preciously little or nothing to combat anti-Judaism and even if she acted, it did not do so in all determination. She herself was paralysed and blinded by the seeds of anti-Judaism sowed throughout the centuries through teaching and practice.

This Church, and with it I am referring to the whole body of Christ, not any particular denomination, which – apart from a few exceptions – did not take its place at the side of its older brother! Nor did he give witness to him, and his godly calling!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of the few who did. He wrote: “Only the one who takes his place at the side of the Jews is entitled to sing Gregorian chants.” There were only a few back then who understood that.

This Church, in some way, actually created the condition for the Jews to become fair game, by stripping Jesus of His Jewish identity and creating their own Jesus – even though the Lord says, “Thou shall not make yourself a picture of me”.

The other irreplaceable brother was supposed to be taken from the Church. (Eph. 2,11-22 and Rom.11,25-26). The fate of the Church and the way of the Church is inextricably connected with the Jewish people, the “precious oil tree”.

With the Holocaust and its precursors over thousands of years God’s plan of salvation was meant to be torpedoed: initially by the first coming and now the return of Jesus.

Many attempts have been made to offer an explanation for the Holocaust – historical, political, economic, ethnical, sociological and religious ones! When these explanations are simply accepted by the Christian Church – that is by us Christians - without at the same time being qualified - and then proven to be, in fact, completely irrelevant – then the church, or rather we, have wasted our chance and missed the opportunity to learn from it. By doing that we have become guilty as well. By satanic design, these explanations detract from the foundational reason and explanation.

In what way were the Jews then responsible for the developing Shoa? One can only answer this question with the evidence that they are guiltless like a lamb led to its slaughter (Ps. 22 und Isaiah. 53). There is no fault or responsibility on the side of the Jews which would explain the Holocaust. There is only the mystery of God's plan and God's view of Israel. The fault and the responsibility lie with the Christians and their churches – it lies with the so-called Christian nations - which should have known better! Who else but we Christians should realize this by God's grace! How have we dealt with that grace and how do we deal with it today?

In fact, things have not changed materially and the hate of Jews continues. Israel and the Jewish people are once again the focus of accusation and attack.

The land of their fathers, into which this people have been led by their God, is supposed to be re-named. Why? Because the name Israel is the name of God's witness. People who don't know better, who don't know the prophetic word (including Christians), are heard saying, "So what! What matters is that peace is restored". For 2000 years this land did not carry the name Israel, and nevertheless Jews were killed. Synagogues still burn today, people are being killed because they are Jews, and again, know-it-alls provide explanations.

Such “know-it-alls” exist even in our churches and fellowships. We are called to love them, but nevertheless to contradict their explanations. Usually they are those who do not yet understand the mystery of Israel, because it takes grace to understand it. But there are also those among them, who do not want to understand, because to understand carries its price.: “Know that it is not you who carries the root, but the root who carries you”.

God’s intention is for the fellowship in the nations to be dependent upon the “noble oil tree”, and it is a Jewish tree. And that is humiliating for the nations! It is exactly this humility, which is the price for understanding.

God gave us the grace, to see further, to be able to see the very bottom, and to come to an understanding of the true cause! For my part I want to explain the cause to my children and grandchildren, in order to provide them with an instrument of navigation for the times to come.

Let us take advantage of this chance. Let us take advantage of a sense of remorse, a remorse that leads to true repentance in order to bow before God for our own wrongdoing, the wrongdoing of our churches and nations! Let us remain bowing down until God lifts us up again.

Let us take advantage of God’s grace in order to intercede for God to remove the veil from the eyes of His people. Intercede for Him to wake Israel from their deep sleep that it may find itself reflected in the One who is the perfected Israel, namely Jesus, the true son of Israel. Let us pray for the church in the nations, so that God may reveal the mystery of Israel to them.

Jakob Krämer

Restoration of all things

Acts 3, 21: ***“He (Jesus) must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets”.***

Everything has to be restored until the Lord returns? This includes our proper relationship as a Church from the nations to Israel. In these present times some Christians recognized that we are in the same boat with the people of Israel and that God’s first covenant people Israel and the new covenant people who have entered into a covenant relationship through Jesus Christ are both persecuted in Muslim countries. Deception overcame the church during the time of the Nazis in Germany because Christians thought they were not connected to Israel and to the 10 commandments, especially not with the first one. Exodus 20, 3 says: ***“I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me”.***

The first Christians suffered under the Roman Caesars because they refused to bring godly honour to the Caesars. Mordecai refused to give godly honour to Haman in the book of Esther because he was a Jew. Hitler hated the Jewish people because of the God of Israel and the 10 commandments. If our conscience is bound to the 10 commandments then a dictator is not able to manipulate a whole nation and to control them. If he plans to kill, to steal or to be worshipped as a Messiah, the people will not enter because they are committed to the word of God. We approach a time when the Antichrist will again demand godly honour; therefore, we must prepare our hearts to stay in a right relationship with our Lord. Manipulation can also happen in different forms inside of the Church and we need to watch our motivations in the light of God’s word. Paul’s motivations were so pure that he said in 2 Corinthians 11, 2: ***“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to HIM”.***

His first desire was to present a pure virgin bride to the Lord. The Lord knows our motives. Do we desire to have a great ministry or to be influential? This is what the Babylonians wanted as they said in Genesis 11, 4: ***“Come let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered”***.

Paul also talks about other wrong motives in Galatians 4, 17-18: ***“Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be always and not just when I am with you. My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you”***. We see Paul's struggle for the right relationship with his spiritual children. Paul is warning us in Galatians 1, 10: ***“Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ”***.

There was the first hour of grace for the church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and as we look at the effects of the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we can only pray that the Spirit of the Lord will take over again.

Joel 2, 28 prophesied: ***“And afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams; your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days”***.

The Spirit of God overcame all gaps existing during that time. The gap between Jew and Gentile couldn't be mentioned at that time, because the basis for this unity was only given through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. With the new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the Lord will again bridge the gap of division and heal the wounds of the last centuries. Jew and Gentile would find their place in the Kingdom of God and do what each one of them is required to do, being in the perfect will of the Lord. Ephesians 2, 14 -16: ***“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by***

abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility". In the entire New Testament this is the only time we see the word "create" in relation to Jesus. This creative act of Jesus is very important because it relates to the preparation of His Bride. During this process, we are passing through great birth pains. It can be painful to find the right place in God's Kingdom because it might not be what we think and also not what others think. We have nothing in our hands and we depend on the Lord. There will be new wine in new wineskins. The unity of the first Church was a supernatural experience. Because of this unity in the Lord Jesus, there was sharing of goods, healing, deliverance, salvation and holiness. The law of Holy Spirit was written on their hearts, as it is written in Jeremiah 31, 31- 34: "***The time is coming', declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them' declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time', declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, know the Lord, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest' declares the Lord***". Without this supernatural intervention we are unable to stand during difficulties and times of suffering.

Jesus was left alone in Gethsemane during His hour of great suffering. In the hour of great suffering, during the Holocaust, the Jewish people were also left alone even by the biggest part of the Church in Europe.

During the eschatological hour of darkness and suffering, the Church of Yeshua and the Israel of God, will stand in opposition with a humanistic understanding and the kingdom of this world.

Jesus loves the Jewish people and we also need to love them. Our love towards the people of Israel needs to be rooted in our love towards Jesus. He is also the door to Israel. John 10, 1- 2: ***“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep”***. We may have some discouraging experience as friends of Israel and could turn against Israel if our motivation is not founded on the Lord. The young Martin Luther was very positive towards the Jewish people because he believed that they would receive the gospel of justification by faith. But when this did not happen as he expected he turned against the Jewish people. It is so important that the church of Jesus Christ would not miss the hour of their responsibility towards Israel! Jesus said, ‘if salt loses its taste, it is worthless and will be thrown on the streets’.

As the Holy Spirit restores everything, He will also restore the manifold gifts and the different callings received through the work of the Holy Spirit to build up the Body of Christ. Ephesians 4, 11-13: ***“It was HE who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be build up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”***.

Many of God’s children are displaced because of the human control in the church. We seldom see Acts 13, 1-3 in practice in the Church. They served the Lord together in prayer and fasting. There was no agenda mentioned in Acts 13, 1-3, but they received personal and corporate words of confirmation for their calling from the Lord. Today the Body of Christ suffers because many of God’s people are in bondage of human structures and they are not liberated to serve according to their calling. If the Holy Spirit will be poured out again, every one of us will walk under the anointment of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus will reign in His Body and everybody will be able to serve in the calling the Lord has given to him.

Paul wanted to bring the gospel of grace to Jerusalem as we read about it in Acts 20, 24: ***“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me- the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace”***. There is a spiritual battle concerning the Gospel of grace especially in Jerusalem.

It is very important to believe and to stand firmly in the grace of God. Romans 5, 15-21: ***“But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who received God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

Guest speakers use this word for the Church in Germany often. Without the grace of God there is no way out for us. But this does not happen automatically. Grace and our faithful response will bring forth the fruits of repentance. As Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew 3, 8: ***“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance”***. Dietrich Bonhoeffer also warned the Church about the dangers of the “cheap grace”.

Paul has worked hard, but he was able to bring grace and hid investment for works for righteousness together. 1 Corinthians 15, 10: ***“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me”***.

Because of His grace we do not have to live under the reign of sin anymore. Romans 6, 14 says: ***“For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace”***. We have nothing to be proud of, because both the Jews and the Gentiles are chosen by grace only. In Romans 11, 5-6 Paul writes: ***“Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace”***.

When the Lord saves the whole remnant of Israel, it will be also because of HIS grace. Romans 11, 26: ***“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob”***. Romans 11, 32 goes further: ***“For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all”***. In the end God will show mercy over Jews and Gentiles so that no one can boast.

Peter says that we have to put our hope in the grace of God. and 2 Peter 3, 15: ***“Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him”***. It seems that Peter did recognize that Paul had special insight when it came to the understanding of grace and he referred to this.

If we count on the grace of God, we can see the purposes of God even in the worst sinner’s life. There is a deep searching going on in Jerusalem for the real foundations of the first church since it all started there. At the moment, Messianic Jewish congregations don’t have a structure like the traditional bishops. There are ideas on how to go about it, but there are also fears that the mistakes of church history could be repeated. We need a supernatural breakthrough. There is an old resistance towards the prophetic ministry in Jerusalem since a very long time. Jesus addressed the rejection of those who were sent from the Lord to Jerusalem and the rejection of prophecies. Matthew 23, 37: ***“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!”***

An apostle is someone who is sent by the Lord and there is always great need to receive those whom the Lord is sending. We need in the

church the restoration of the five-fold ministry. According to Ephesians 2, 19: ***“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone”***.

The Lord is calling and sending workers in His harvest and He will restore these ministries and protect His flock from the self-appointed or self-promoting ministries. There is some confusion in the body of Christ because the five-fold ministry needs to be restored.

Peter Robertson from New Zealand wrote a book called *The Jerusalem Revival*. In this book he wrote: “The church in New Zealand will only see revival in the measure they are investing themselves for a Holy Spirit revival in Jerusalem.” I got his permission to quote some short passage from his book *Letters to a Young Prophet*: “The unholy three’s only way of conceiving “government” in both Church and state is either the tyranny of the one over the many (dictatorship), or the tyranny of the majority over the minority (democracy). Prior to the Reformation, tyrannical governments were the order of the day via kings and popes. Since then Protestantism has been seduced by various manifestations of secular and religious democracy. It continues to strike me as queer indeed that Protestants who are so clear-eyed concerning the fallibility of an infallible pope are so utterly blind to their own equally stupid notion that majority of God’s people are sure to be right. The “apostolic revolution” which so many have been trumpeting in recent years ought to be addressing the substantial gaps in the Church’s foundations caused by all manner of humanistic rather than divine government. It’s entirely about the Church being built on God’s foundations, which are, Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 2:19-20.

The true apostolic revolution is all about God’s prerogative and right to build HIS house on HIS foundation, which consists of apostles and prophets, sovereign created and welded together by Jesus. This is the only “construction” that has the strength to bear the weight of those other

leadership (usually pastoral, teaching, evangelistic) ministries necessary for the life and health of the local church life.” Some time ago I received another article about the teachings of the Nicolaitians that could be interesting also for you. We read about this certain group of people in Revelations 2, 6 but I did not have a lot of information concerning their true identity before.

According to the article: “The Holy Spirit makes us aware about the teachings that influences the Body of Christ to separate the people from a walk of intimacy with the Lord. One of the stumbling stones is the spirit of the Nicolaitians. We recognized this spirit raising its head at the very outset of the early apostolic church and it represents a perverted form of leadership that has an opposite motivation to that of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord will draw the people to the Lord Jesus while this counterfeit influence seeks to separate the people from the Lord. The Nicolaitians spirit will masquerade as a true governmental and spiritual authority, but using fear, manipulation, and control to achieve its agenda. The term “Nicolaitians” comes from two Greek words “Nikos” and “Laos”. Nikos means to conquer and by implication, dominancy over the defeated. The term “laos” means “the common people” or the “laity.” Then it means: “to conquer (dominate-intimidate-manipulate) the common people (laity).

An examination of church history is highlighting the Nicolaitians movement that marked the beginning of an unrighteous priesthood within the Church. We want to identify the spiritual influences that has stolen the inheritance of the saints throughout the Church ages and overcome with Christ as He overcame.

True leadership will equip the people to do the work of the ministry. Ephesians 4:11-12.

The apostle Paul was willing to lay down his life for the people to whom he ministered. He did not lord his spiritual authority over the

people but readily poured himself out for the sake of the Lord's Church. That quality is the predominant separation between the genuine and the counterfeit forms of leadership. The true leadership model is not that of a pyramid but an inverted pyramid. True spiritual fathers will take great joy in seeing their spiritual offspring flourish in their relationship with the Lord and the impartation of the gifts. The Lord clearly expressed his disgust and hatred for the Nicolaitian spirit and its corrupt agenda. In fact, those who shared His disdain for this evil opposition were commended. (Revelation 2:6) For those entrusted with true authority, make no place for intimidation, control and the power-hungry counterfeit authority over the sheep.

The Nicolaitian spirit will target Christians who have lost their "first-love" affections for the Lord. The enemy meticulously orchestrates a series of life events that cool our affections for the things of the Spirit with the intended hope of imparting apathy and lethargy. Hope deferred will make the heart sick! If accomplished, the door is then opened to this form of leadership that directs the focus of the people away from the Lord. Thankfully, the spirit of wisdom and revelation is promised to each believer, affording understanding of our rich inheritance in Christ. The Lord is granting the spirit of revelation to open "eyes and ears" to a place of fellowship with Him and taking away hopelessness. In its place, "first-love" affections are being restored. Holy desperation is in the hearts of a bridal company who will not be satisfied hearing the testimony of others who have encountered the Lord Jesus— they must have their own personal relationship.

In John 10 there is a clear word from the Lord stating, "***My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow me***". We are promised the ability to experientially apprehend the revelation of His Voice. The more acutely familiar we are with His Voice the more capable we become of recognizing the counterfeit. There has been a plot of the adversary to steal this aspect of our heritage, but the desolate heritage of the saints will be restored. The restoration promises in Joel 2:25 will take place. The Lord

prophetically outlined this privilege when He said: ***“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out”*** (John 10: 3). The Lord is calling us by name and leading us out of the bondage and oppression into a place of freedom and liberty because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. The Nicolaitian spirit will no longer hold bride of Christ hostage. Her destination is to be joined with the Lord in the promised union.

True Apostolic leadership will be commissioned with a fourfold mandate like the one given to the apostle Paul. The Lord sent one of His cherished friends, Ananias, to release a prophetic commission to the now converted Saul of Tarsus. Ananias told Paul four specific admonitions that would overshadow his life and are also characterize apostolic leaders. The scripture in Acts 22:12-15 says: ***“A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard’”***. Paul was empowered with four distinctive privileges that exemplified his apostolic calling. Those are:

1. Appointed to know His will;
2. See the Righteous One;
3. Hear utterances from His lips;
4. Be a witness/testifier of what was seen and heard.

The word witness is a judicial term signifying one who gives testimony only to what they have personally seen and heard. Anointed eyes and ears are essential in the accomplishment of this mandate. These attributes will begin to separate true governmental qualities from the Nicolaitians spirit.

The Disciple of Jesus, John must have known the teaching of the Nicolaitians. In this light we understand also better what he had to say about the teachings of the Gnostics and the Nicolaitians. He is warning us in his first letter, in 1 John 2, 18-21: ***“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us,***

but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth”.

And in 1 John 2, 26-27 we also read: *“These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him”.*

John was for sure not against it to teach in the church; he is only addressing those leaders who believe that without their advice the sheep of the Lord would not find the right way or understand the ways of the Lord.

We are in need of a unity created by the Lord Himself between Israel and the Church in the nations. The Lord will build Jerusalem and it could be that He will call and use the outcasts as David did it in the case of his first army. Psalm 147: 2-3 says: *“The Lord is building Jerusalem. He gathers the outcasts of Israel. He heals the wounded heart”.*

The restoration of all things is related to a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said in Acts 1, 5: *“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”.* Immediately after this the disciples asked Jesus if this is the time that the Kingdom would be restored to Israel. Verse 6 says: *“So when they met together, they asked him, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”* Jesus doesn't deny the connection between the outpouring of Holy Spirit and the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. He only says in verse 7 that *“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority”.*

Before the kingdom for Israel would be restored, the power, the call and the commissioning to preach the gospel all over the world, the Holy Spirit had to be poured out and the disciples had to start their work in Jerusalem. Verse 8 tells us: ***“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”.***

In Ezekiel 37, 1- 2 the Spirit brought the prophet to a valley full of dry bones. Only after he had observed this very sad situation was, he allowed to prophesy life into the dry bones. Ezekiel was so affected by the horrific scenery with the dry bones that he could only prophesy out of obedience to the Lord, not by his personal emotions.

Believers were together on the day of Pentecost in one place and in unity. Acts 2, 1: ***“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place”.***

On the one hand, unity in prayer and being together in one place is a pre-condition for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it is a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In 1982 during a European-wide meeting in Strasbourg, some believers received a picture. There was ducks swimming in a little pool, which was divided by a fence in the middle. But then a strong rain came and the level of the water rose so that the dividing wall was covered with water and all the ducks could swim together in one pool.

Our prayer in unity will release the Holy Spirit afresh over the body of Christ.

Verses 4-5: ***“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven”.*** All were filled and God did not show any partiality. Even during that time Jerusalem was already a city where Jewish people and proselytes came

together from all nations under heaven. Verses 9-11: ***“Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs”***.

In his preaching Peter refers to the prophet Joel. Verse 17: ***“I will pour out my Spirit over all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy”***. All flesh means all flesh, young and old, men and women, Jew and Gentile. Verse 21: ***“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”***. The Name of the Lord will be known and many people will call on His Name, Yeshua. In a time of great need and suffering God will bring us to this place. The Holy Spirit would also restore the grace of repentance to the Church. We need the repentance, which comes from a spirit of conviction. Peter addresses the Jewish people in the power of the Holy Spirit and with a lot of love, and not with a spirit of condemnation. Acts 2, 23: ***“You have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death”*** and Acts 2, 36: ***“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ”***.

The Holy Spirit brought conviction and there was a wonderful reaction by the grace of God. Verse 37: ***“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”***

The first time we find the word “restore,” mentioned in the Bible, is in the story where Joseph meets the cupbearer, who was restored into his position before the pharaoh (Genesis 40:13-21).

In Psalm 51, 12 we read: ***“Restore unto me the joy of my salvation”***. Jesus also refers to this truth in Luke 10, 20: ***“However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven”***. Every day the joy of our salvation can be our well-of-life and encouragement.

Another well of our joy is obedience to the Lord as he leads us each day. John 15 9-11 ***"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete"***.

I don't think that Jesus is referring here to the "Ten Commandments", but more to the leading of the Holy Spirit, whom He experienced every day. Real joy in the Lord is related to our ability to hear and act on what the Lord is asking us to do. The expectation that the Lord leads us in a real way is often under attack. Sometimes we begin to function more according to people's expectations and it isn't easy to discern between the two.

The Holy Spirit will also restore godly authority in the church.

There are two kinds of authority, the delegated, and the transmitted authority coming from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The delegated authority for instance is the one which the police officer has. Whenever I see men or women in the uniform of the police, I ought to respect this person as a delegated authority from the state in which I live. In some Churches ushers have a special uniform or a nametag. They are giving instructions which have to be followed because they are authorized from the church leadership.

If we are in a place of authority, there is still the question relating to our motives for exercising authority. When our motivations are from God, the Glory belongs to HIM. He is the "One" being revealed. On the other hand, when a desire to dominate arises within us, selfish ambitions can come forth.

This was always a question in the life of Jesus. After He spoke and healed people, the spiritual leaders were asking Him: ***“in whose authority are you doing this?”***

It is as if they were saying: You are definitely not doing this because this authority was delegated to you – So who sent you? Luke 20, 2-6: ***“Tell us by what authority you are doing these things, they said. Who gave you this authority? He replied: ‘I will also ask you a question. Tell me, John’s baptism was it from heaven, or from men?’ They discussed it among themselves and said, ‘If we say, from heaven, he will ask, why didn’t you believe him? But if we say, from men all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet’. So they answered, we don’t know where it was from. Jesus said, ‘neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things’”.***

At one time, in John 5, 19 Jesus also answered like this: ***“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does”.*** Our Lord Jesus Christ was the ultimate example of true spiritual authority when we look at His life and teachings. To enter into the same lifestyle, we have to stay very close to Him, just as close as the branches are to the vine.

As we see him washing the feet of His disciples, we grasp the character of Jesus.

He proceeded to perform the functions of the lowest slave. God was here incarnated, the Creator of the universe, the One who had the right to exercise all authority, acting like a slave! Jesus said in John 13, 13-15: ***“You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If Lord then, your Teacher, and I have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you”.*** It is an authority with an entirely different motivation from anything that is human and it displayed the true character of God.

How do we enter into the authority given by the Lord? For example, anyone can go fishing. But when someone fishes often and

becomes good at catching fish, you might say: that person is a “fisherman.” Firstly, is not a title or some kind of position, but a description of what he does. Similarly, many people can fix a leaking faucet, but when they do this sort of work regularly and become good at what they do, then they are recognized as a “plumber”.

So, it is in the church. God has assigned special tasks to each one. These are unique areas of service through which we nurture the body of Christ. No one can delegate the members to prophesy in the services, if the Lord has not gifted the person. When God regularly uses someone in the area of prophecy and this person becomes known from the faithful way, he is exercising this gift, he could be called a prophet. When someone brings many people to the Lord, we say he is an evangelist. It is not about the titles. The Lord told us in Matthew 23, 9: ***“And do not call anyone on earth father for you have one Father and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called teacher, for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant”***. The titles are reserved for the Father and for Jesus! He is “King of Kings” and “Lord of lords.”

In these present days, in some Free Churches people are teaching about divine order. The basic thought behind these instructions seems to be that there is a kind of hierarchy, a sort of chain-of-command within the church of God what we have to recognize. Certain people think that we have to submit ourselves to this hierarchy - we have to “get in line” with it - if we want to fulfil God’s will, and experience blessings. There exists a kind of pyramid structure, similar to an earthly corporation or government within the church. But the structure of the Kingdom of Heaven is different.

Matthew 20, 25-28: ***“But Jesus called them to Himself and said: You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”***.

Jesus makes a strong point here also according to Luke 22, 26 by saying: ***“on the contrary, he who is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves”.***

It is exactly the opposite to the way that it is in the world. Paul himself says concerning the authority manifested through him in 2 Corinthians 1, 24: ***“Not that we lord it over your faith, but we, are helpers of your joy”.*** A leader is someone who goes in front as an example. The others seeing this example realize that this is from God and they follow. King David for example was a lowly shepherd, but the Lord chose him to lead His people. Many of the prophets were nobodies until God touched their lives and began to act through them. One day when the twelve were walking with Jesus, they began having an argument. They were fighting about who would be the greatest when Jesus becomes king. The Lord used this opportunity again and tried to show them something about how He intended His body to function. He took a little child beside Him and said something very profound. Luke 9,48: ***“He who is least among you all will be great”.*** This is exactly the opposite of our normal, human way of thinking.

Yeshua will restore all things before He comes back and His church will be very different. We learn some truths from His word only as we come into situations where we are forced to find a solution to our problems. We are questioning ourselves in the Church: What kind of Church life did we pass onto our younger generation? What are we looking for in the Church and what are our desires? The letter to the Hebrews tells us what Abraham was looking for!

Hebrews 11, 8–10: ***“By faith Abraham obeyed God when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he waited for the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God”.***

Abraham preferred to live in tents, in something that was temporary, because he was looking for the perfect city, the heavenly Jerusalem! Abraham was dissatisfied with the intentions and the convictions of the ordinary men of his age. Even though he also would have liked to provide stability and a good future for Isaac and Jacob he still preferred the tent, a temporary home. Also, in the church when we meet someone who brings in a successful concept of Church life, fellowship and theology, we are often impressed. Successful ministries are very attractive, especially if a church has gone through very dry times. We are impressed, because we hope that our church would also grow in numbers and spiritual influence. Abraham could have built a big palace because he was very rich. But he chose to live in tents because his desire was to wait for the eternal city, where the foundation, architect and builder would be God Himself. He did not pretend that he had already arrived, but he continued to seek the heavenly city. He remained to be a seeker and a man full of desires to find everything in the Lord and to receive from HIM the new home. If we pretend that we have arrived as an individual or as a group, believers who cannot stand in their unfulfilled longings are cheated by promised expectations and because they are unable to be alone, they are willing to be a part of some unbalanced communities. The methods of this world have received much space in some congregations and not only in traditional churches. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in chapter 10 verses 35-36: ***“So do not throw away your confidence, it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised”***. Because they desired a better heavenly country, God was not ashamed to be called their God. God is already responding to the desires of his people. He has prepared a city, a place for those who wait for His city.

Hebrews 11, 14-16: ***“For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country, from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better that is a heavenly country. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them”***.

Without a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit the Lord will not have full control over the Church. The Bridegroom Yeshua will form the shape of the bridal Church. He will create Himself the one “new man” out of Jew and Gentile. He has created and prepared a place for us – the new city of Jerusalem. We need the leading of the Holy Spirit in our personal life and also in the Church.

Every truth we have overlooked and neglected during the centuries of Church history will be restored in a visible way, in the new building of God. Jesus teaches us: blessed are the hungry. In Matthew 5:3 we also can read: ***“Blessed are the poor in spirit. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven”***.

Raniero Cantalamessa said: “There was a shift in Church History. After some time, it was no more recommended for a group of believers to be poor, as Jesus also was poor. But there was a concern about the poor and to help them out of their misery. To be poor is like the word of Jesus for the eunuch. Some are born poor, some are made poor by men, some have made themselves poor for the Kingdom’s sake”. Like Paul said, if I give all my possessions to the poor and it is not out of love, it would not count! The motive is still the most important! In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul reminds us that without love, nothing counts before God.

To be poor in the spirit also means that we accept that our knowledge and understanding about the ways of the Lord are very limited, especially if it comes to the will of God for another person. The Lord does not always inform us about His plans for other brothers and sisters. Real prophecy comes from an inner poverty. I do not know what the other person needs but the Lord knows. I do not know the right time but He knows. Isaiah 50, 4: ***“The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens me morning by morning; he awakens my ear to hear as the learned”***.

We need more freedom of personal convictions, because if we have strong convictions we could pass on our thoughts to others. The poor in spirit will not dare to say something of his own.

To discern all the information, we receive every day is a great challenge. Hebrews 13, 9-10: ***“Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods, which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat”***. The Lord has ways to feed those who seek Him even when they find themselves outside of the “camp”.

Hebrews 13, 13–14: ***“Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city but we seek the one to come”***.

Often, we do not even have to go outside the camp, because we already find ourselves outside. If it wasn't really our fault, then we will be very happy one day that we are outside. Galatians 1,

10: ***“For do I now persuade men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ”***. Bondservants like Paul make a decision to seek first the ways that would please the Lord.

Christa Behr

Thoughts about the first commandment

As we read about the first 300 years of the church, we realize that the believers paid a high price and suffered a lot. Many Christians became Martyrs. As Jesus was tempted in the desert the enemy required from him that he would bow down and worship him (Matthew 4, 1-11).

Jesus answered with a word from the scripture as He said: *“Away with you, Satan! For you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve”* (Matthew 4, 10).

The issue of worshipping the Roman Caesar was a great test for the young body of Christ. According to the tradition, the first disciples had to go through the baptism of suffering and only a few died at normal age. The first centuries of church history are very interesting and therefore, I would like to share some information about this time. The local persecution of the Christians took place from the year 64 until 250 after Christ. But the common and much greater oppression of the Roman Caesar started with Caesar Decius in the year 249 and finished in the year 311 with Caesar Galerius. Every Roman citizen was requested to bring incense before the picture of the Caesar. Many left the faith in Yeshua and were called “Lapsi”, because of fear and weakness. They offered incense or found another way to get a paper that confirmed their offerings for the Cesar. But the number of those who remained faithful was also great. They endured and lost their property; they had been sent to do forced labour, were tortured or became martyrs. Especially the bishops were persecuted so that the church would have no leaders. Decius died in the battle with the Goths and Caesar Valerian (253-260) continued the persecution. After he died there was a break of persecution for forty years and some wonderful church buildings have been raised.

But the greatest test was still ahead under Caesar Diocletian, who began his reign in the year 264. In the year 303 he destroyed many churches, burned the bibles and like Decius, he too forced the citizens to offer a common sacrifice for the Caesar. If someone did not take part in it, torture and execution was his future. After Diocletian, persecution continued under Galerius in the same way until the year 311. In the time of Diocletian there was a captain with the name Marcellus. On the birthday of the Caesar the whole legion was invited for a great meal. During the feast everyone was supposed to bring an offering for the Caesar. A huge picture had been installed and sacrificial fire was burning in front of it. Everyone stepped forward and threw some pieces of incense into the fire. Captain Marcellus had put his weapons down and said: "I serve and offer sacrifices only to the king of heaven, Jesus Christ! If soldiers are required to give godly honour to the Caesar then I cannot continue to serve in the army and I lay down my arms and my belt. As they questioned and confronted him, he answered: I am a Christian and I am not allowed to give godly honour and worship to any Caesar. Godly honour and worship belong only to God and to his son, Jesus Christ. On the 28th of October 298 the Centurion Officer Marcellus was beheaded and killed. (From the book of Church History Kolder-Koch)

If we think about the time of National Socialism it came also exactly against the first commandment. Hitler thought about himself, that he was a messiah and redeemer for the German people and the whole world. Therefore, he demanded that the people to greet him, recognize him and worshiped him. Whoever was not willing to say "Heil Hitler" (salvation comes from Hitler) would be persecuted or killed. Sadly, the Church did not point out in the strongest terms that this greeting is against the first commandment, and therefore, it is impossible for a Christian to use it. Also, in the Islamic fundamentalist movement there are some leaders who claimed for themselves to be the 12th Imam or at least to be the ones who are preparing his way. If we do not learn from history we are not prepared for the future. Fear of men and the danger of pleasing men instead of God is still a problem in the church. If our discernment is not

deeply connected to the good shepherd, Yeshua, we are in danger of failing. In the book of Revelation, we see that everything will be related to the question: whom do we worship?

Revelation 7, 9-12: *"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one can number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be to our god forever and ever. Amen'."*

In the book of Revelation, we find many verses about the issue of worshipping God like: Rev.4,10; Rev. 5,14; Rev. 7,11; Rev.11,15; Rev.14,7; Rev. 15,4; Rev. 19,4; Rev. 19,10; Rev. 20,4; Rev. 22,9.

Many people will worship the beast and the dragon. Revelation 13, 4-6+8 tells us:

"So, they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast saying, 'who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'" And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle and those who dwell in heaven. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world".

Other verses that prefigure negative worship are in the book of Revelation 29,13,12-15; 14,9-11; 19,20. If we despise the first commandment, we are opening the door and will also fail as it comes to the other commandments of God. I believe we need a restoration of the fear of the Lord, and the grace of God, to overcome all the fear of men and pleasing of men, so that our Lord Yeshua will receive all glory and honour. It is possible that Europe will slowly become a Moslem continent and many will convert to Islam in order to save their lives or to receive

certain benefits. It is unthinkable, and totally out of question that the Jewish people would convert to Moslem faith.

Even the Moslem leaders recognize this reality and therefore they have only one desire: to wipe out the Jewish people, and the Jewish state in the Middle East. We could ask ourselves why we cannot expect the same determination and faithfulness as we see in the Jewish people, from so-called Christian countries?

Christa Behr

Testimony of Christa Behr

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How the Lord got me involved with Israel:

I was born after the “Second World war” as the third child of a family of vegetable farmers. We grew up in a little village “Rosenweide” near Hamburg. As with most of the people who live in the north of Germany, my family church background is Lutheran. There I heard the gospel for the first time. As a child I loved to read the children's Bible and it spoke to my heart. We were five children and I have an older sister, brother and two younger brothers. As I look back, I can see more clearly how the Lord deepened my relationship to Israel and got me more involved. I remember that as a teenager I was not willing to learn the national hymn of Germany. I thought that nationalism was misleading our whole nation, and therefore it was better not to be involved. After I had finished my 3-year education as a gardener of vegetables and fruit trees in June 1972 I continued to work in my profession in Munich. In this city I got to know the Lord in a personal way on the 9th of June 1972 during an evangelization with Pastor David Wilkerson from New York. A few months later I attended a Bible school for two years in Salzburg-Austria. I was trained as a Lutheran Bible teacher for children in the public primary and high school. From September 1974 until May 1980, I worked for 6 years in Haid- Ansfelden (near Linz) in Austria as a Bible

teacher for children in public schools. I got involved in the Lutheran Church in a total pioneering situation, because there was no pastor at that time and real church life was missing. Coming from the North of Germany I never really met any Roman Catholics. In Haid there was a Catholic Chaplain called Kurt Waldhoer, who made it easy for me to get a positive impression of the Catholic Church. He was very open and even followed my invitation to visit a typical evangelical evangelization in Linz in November 1976. Two years later he started a prayer group in the Catholic Church in Haid and I participated regularly. In the coming years we experienced something like a little revival. Many young people accepted Jesus as their personal savior. As Austria is mainly Catholic, it was easier for me as a Lutheran Bible teacher to invite the Catholics I met to a prayer meeting in their own Church. Out of this prayer group developed the "Rhema Fellowship" in St. Marien, near Linz, which is founded and led by Jacob and Grete Kraemer. Now they have their service in Linz.

After being in Austria for 13 years I felt that the Lord wanted me to get Austrian citizenship, which I received in September 1985 in Salzburg.

Coming to my relationship to Israel I heard in the year 1978 a tape from my counselor at that time, Otto Siegfried von Bibra, about Israel's past, present and future. He also spoke about the great guilt of Germany towards the God of Israel and the Jewish people. He quoted the scripture from Zechariah 2, 8 ***"for he who touches you my people (Israel) touches the apple of His eye."*** As I listened, I understood that we as Germans have touched God at the most sensitive place, at the apple of His eye. He also urged us as believers from Germany to repent for the sin of our nation. Pastor Bibra was convinced that great judgment would come on the Austrian and German nation if we refused to repent. I felt a deep pain in my heart and wept, because I understood more about the great guilt of my people towards the God of Israel and the Jewish people. I also realized that I was a German if I liked it or not and that I had to face this fact. I wished with all my heart to do something about it, like Corry ten Boom did at the

time of the Second World War. She and her family helped the Jewish people in Holland as they had been persecuted and killed. I listened again to the tape, wrote it down and started to teach about it. In February 1977, I was able to visit Israel for the first time with the Catholic Bible society. I had been led, in May 1980, to move to Salzburg and work there with the youth and students in the Lutheran Church. There I also had the opportunity to share about Israel with students. Some Jewish physicians from Tel Aviv, who had just visited Salzburg, came to this lecture about Israel because of an advertisement in the University and their reaction was very positive. After the first visit to Israel I just wished to go back one day with good friends to spend more time in prayer at some places in Israel. In May 1981 I was able to come back with a group of friends. During this journey I received a call to move to Israel and understood that it would have something to do with building bridges between Israel and the Church in the nations. What puzzled me was that I had just moved to Salzburg, because of a clear leading from the Lord. So, I shared this impression with a sister on this journey. She said: "Give it back to the Lord and if it is from Him it will come back in His time." I really gave it back and even forgot about it. I worked hard with the youth and students in Salzburg and experienced the Lord's blessing. After 4 years I had a burnout, and Pastor Larry Christenson from USA, a dear friend and he was the leader in the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal, helped me to visit some lively Lutheran churches in America for two months. At the end of this time in the USA I felt refreshed in my relationship to the Lord and understood that I should leave Salzburg and move closer to Vienna. Before I had even unpacked my suitcases and boxes in the new apartment in Gloggnitz, a German couple from Hamburg visited me. Their call was to help Russian Jews on their way back home to Israel. They gave me a book from Steven Lightle "Exodus II". He was a messianic Jew from USA. His book talks about a vision he had. He saw that Jewish people would leave Russia at one point and we as Christians in Europe would have a second opportunity and the call to help them on their way back to Israel and stand with the Jewish people. This time we could do better as Christians than we did during the Second World War. The Lord opened

a door for me to help the Jewish people, who all came, at that time, from Russia and Ukraine, through Vienna on their way to Israel or the USA.

My apartment was near the Hungarian border and since 1986, every month I started to visit a meeting of reformed pastors in Hungary. Because Hungary was still under Communism and there was not a lot of connection with western countries among the believers, I tried to help them in many practical ways. At that time, I also visited the Czech Republic, Romania, and East Germany. Especially in Romania the people suffered from poverty, hunger and oppression. In September 1986 I stopped being employed by the Lutheran Church in Gloggnitz and my financial support came now only from some friends in Austria and Germany. This worried me, and I did not tell my parents about it, but I did get a word from the Lord from Matthew 8, 20 "***And Jesus said to him: Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.***" I realized that this was not even required from me because I still had my apartment.

I still had an uneasy feeling from not receiving a regular income, and in a prayer time in November 1986 I felt that I was supposed to meet Steven Lightle. I did not have any clue how to make this happen and just waited and prayed. Two weeks later Roland Smith, a pastor from California came to my house in Gloggnitz near Vienna. He asked me if I could help him to prepare a prayer meeting in Budapest, because he heard that I had contacts to pastors in Hungary. This prayer meeting would take place in May 1987 in seven capital cities in Europe. He informed me that Steven Lightle would be part of this prayer team. Now I understood that I would be able to get to know him in a few months and the intercessory-prayer movement, which he was a part of. I could take part in the prayer meetings in Rome, Budapest and Bonn. In May 1988 he invited me to join his intercessor prayer journey to Israel. Also, in 1988, just before this journey, I got to know several messianic believers from Israel. I met them at an intercessory prayer conference in Berlin to remember the Evian Conference of 1938. Fifty years ago, all the nations had sent their

delegates to Evian to discuss what to do with the Jewish people. It was already clear that Hitler wanted to kill them, but only Denmark the Dominican Republic and a few small countries were willing to take them in. Hitler had his spies at this meeting in Evian and they came back and told him, "You can do anything to the Jewish people, because the whole world does not care about them." We drove from Berlin with a bus to Evian and prayed in the Hotel where 50 years before this meeting has taken place. We asked God for forgiveness for the guilt of our nations because they had turned their back against Israel and left the Jewish people alone in their hour of need.

In Israel in May 1988 I met other messianic Jewish believers and developed personal relationships. From 1988 until the end of October 1990 I visited Israel a few more times because I wanted to find out if the Lord would confirm my calling to move there. My friends in Austria, Germany, Hungary and Israel prayed with me and they encouraged me to go to Israel. Especially my friends from Hungary Imre and Eva Szabo received some messages for me, which encouraged me very much to go. Through the meeting with Johannes Facius, Kjell Sjöberg from Sweden and Steven Lightle, God opened the door to "International Intercessors", a worldwide prayer movement. Our meetings with these brothers in April 1989 in Vienna and every part of Austria, was the beginning for the group "Intercessors for Austria".

Because the Lord used me to start these meetings I was now faced with the question, 'can a woman be called in a pioneer situation, and give lectures?' For myself I got an answer from the Lord by reading Jeremiah 1, 7: ***"But the Lord said to me: Do not say, I am a youth, for you shall go to all to whom I send you and whatever I command you, you shall speak."*** For me the answer was: "Don't say I'm a woman, for you shall go where I send you and speak what I tell you to speak."

Because I wanted to find out more why I should move to Israel I met some people in Jerusalem to pray and share with them. To get more clarity I stayed in an apartment for a week and asked the Lord for direction. The strongest word which spoke to me was from John 11, 51-52: ***“Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.”***

Until now I did not realize that Jesus died not only for our sins but also for the unity between Jews and Gentiles. If He was willing to die for this unity, then it must be something very important for the Lord. Later on, I read in Ephesians 2, 12-16 another scripture which speaks about the importance of this unity: ***“Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.”***

The unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ is a creative work of our Lord Jesus. It needs the supernatural power of Yeshua to unite what has been separated for such a long time.

I wanted to come to Israel on the 15th of January 1991 but unfortunately this was the exact date of the beginning of the Gulf War. The apartment I had rented was not prepared for a war situation and therefore I needed to wait in Austria. There was neither furniture nor a sealed room in the apartment which was required because of this war. It was not equipped for an expected gas attack. Before I left Austria, Manfred Riss, a Lutheran pastor, had a dream that he should buy me a gas mask. After waiting for a few weeks, I felt I must move to Jerusalem even though the war had not yet ended. I asked for two things to happen: Firstly, that I would have the money for the flight and secondly that

during the war a family would be willing to take me into their home. Both things happened on the 14th February 1991 and I got a flight for the 20th of February 1991. Arriving at the airport in Israel I needed to take out my gas mask to have it ready in the taxi if any alarm should take place during the taxi ride to Jerusalem. I arrived one week before the end of the war. During this week we needed to go three times to the sealed room because Scud Missiles were falling on Israel. Exactly one week later, on the feast of Purim, the 28th of February 1991, the war ended. Our congregation in Jerusalem had a wedding exactly on that date. We were joyful and able to participate at the wedding feast without our gas masks.

Five months later I needed to leave my apartment that I had rented from a member of the congregation. I had renovated the whole apartment and invested quite a lot of money and work. Therefore, I asked myself the question: Did I come to Israel to repair apartments? One day I read in Isaiah 56, 21-22: ***“They shall build houses and inhabit them, they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat.”***

Reading this verse, I knew that the Lord was speaking to me and that I would not move again. I asked people how can a foreigner live for a longer time in one place? They told me ‘only if you buy’. A little later I read another scripture from Matthew 19, 29: ***“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”***

This word has, of course, been in the Bible all the time, but I never noticed that there was a promise for receiving houses if you leave your family for the Lord’s sake! In the hope that I would receive the money for the house and also find the house, I rented, together with a sister from Switzerland and a family from Russia, a house in Jerusalem Malha.

In my newsletter I mentioned that I believe I will receive a house in Jerusalem. A short time later a good friend of mine, Marie-Agnes

Gräfin von Clary und Aldringen from Salzburg had a dream that she was to buy a house in Jerusalem. Asking for a confirmation she opened the Bible and read Jeremiah 32, 15: ***"Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."*** The next day she called me and said: "If you find the house, I will pay for it, because I received 280,000\$ for selling a meadow to the police headquarter in Salzburg. Immediately I started to search for a house in Jerusalem with the help of a real estate agent. I was looking for a house with a big living room to accommodate meetings. Because I didn't find such a house I decided to wait, for I had rented the house I was living in for eleven months anyhow. In October I had a very special guest from Russia. Ivan was a Bishop of all "Non-registered Pentecostal Churches" in the former USSR. He received a word for me concerning the house from Acts 12, 12: ***"... he (Peter) came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying."***

Half a year later my lawyer informed me that the house I was already renting was for sale. Somehow, I knew it would be the house I was already living in. The problem was I was still lacking another 100,000\$. We tried to get the money as a loan without interest, but it didn't work out. One day my friend Marie-Agnes called me and said: "I have sold my last apartment in Kitzbühl/Austria and I will pay for the whole house including the tax". She visited me twice before she went to be with the Lord on the 30th of January 2009. One year later I put a plate of remembrance on painted tiles in the house, with the word from Psalm 103, 2: ***"Bless the Lord, o my soul and forget not all His benefits."***

This experience was a wonderful confirmation for me because even in Jerusalem this does not happen every day! Now there was still the question how I could get a visa and stay in Israel? Probst (a bishop of the Lutheran Church) Karl-Heinz Ronecker was ready to apply for a visa for me if my bishop in Austria, Dieter Knall would write a letter of recommendation. He did, and I am so thankful that I have been able to stay in the Land of Israel for the last 29 years. Six years ago, I received temporary residence and an Israeli ID Number.

Since I moved to Israel my understanding for the need of repentance, reconciliation and restoration for Germans and Austrians towards Israel deepened.

Scriptures like 2 Samuel 21, 1-3 made it clear to me, that Germany and Austria would miss out on a spiritual blessing if they, as believers, do not take responsibility and identify with the sins of our forefathers. 2 Samuel 21, 1-3 ***“Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, “It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites.” So, the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah. Therefore, David said to the Gibeonites, “What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?”***

If the famine in Israel was not to continue, David needed to repent for the sin of the former king Saul. In that time God called priests and today He is also calling them. These are the people who stand in the gap for the sin of their nation. To respond is still a decision of our free will. As we read in Isaiah 6, 8: ***“Who shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said: “Here am I! Send me.”*** The prophet Isaiah recognizes that he has unclean lips and that he dwells among people with unclean lips.

Right from the time of my arrival in Jerusalem I attended a messianic Jewish congregation and the German Lutheran Redeemer Church in the Old City of Jerusalem. Our pastors Benjamin and Reuven Berger belong to the second generation of Holocaust survivors and their lives have been deeply affected by the suffering of their family. Their father was a Jew from Leipzig (Germany) and their mother was born in Deutschkreuz (Austria). A big part of Benjamin and Reuven’s family from the mother’s side perished in the Holocaust. Being born in Germany and having Austrian citizenship it touched my heart to meet families who had suffered in Germany and in Austria. Many people in Austria are not

conscious that most Austrians were not victims, but played a major, active role in the destruction of the Jewish people. Hitler was born in Upper Austria, as well as Adolph Eichmann, Franz Stangl and other Nazis, who committed terrible crimes. Too many people had welcomed Hitler during the “Anschluss” in 1938.

For many years I have traveled with Jewish brethren throughout Germany and Austria visiting different churches and calling for repentance. In 1993 I prepared, for the first time, a repentance service in the former concentration camp in Bergen-Belsen, near Hanover. During our prayer time some pastors and leaders started to weep and were able to ask God for forgiveness for our terrible sin towards the God of Israel and his covenant people. We confessed especially our sin of passivity as a church in a time where the church should have stood up and stood with the Jewish people. Benjamin was very moved because it was the first time he saw Germans weeping over the guilt of Germany towards the Jews. In February 1994 I was able to organize a prayer journey to the former concentration camp in Auschwitz, Poland. Just a few months before, I had visited the camp together with Reuven Berger for the very first time. I was shocked to see this enormous area, which had been prepared only to kill people systematically. A short time later, I visited a pastor in Germany. Friedrich Aschoff was the chairman of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal in Germany at that time. He had on his heart to visit all the countries, which had suffered under the Germans during the Second World War and ask them for forgiveness. He asked me where to begin. Coming from Auschwitz I recommended to start there, because it is the darkest place on earth and the place where Jewish people have suffered the most under the Germans and Austrians. We met at the beginning of December 1993 and in February 1994 we were able to visit a group of 50 people from the former Concentration Camp in Auschwitz.

Benjamin Berger, Ilan Zamir and myself stood in front of the Gypsum Model in Auschwitz 1, which shows how the victims were forced to go into the undressing room and then into the gas chambers.

Benjamin said: 'If we could only weep over all that happened here', thinking also about his grand-parents, uncle and aunty with her children who had been murdered there. We went behind the model and wanted to pray. Fürst Castell saw us standing there and he came and grabbed Benjamin and Ilan, and wept. He told us later that, as a German, he was so ashamed after seeing what happened here, that he did not weep for 20 years. For him this was an important personal experience and the beginning of a new active role in calling for repentance in Germany.

From May 1994 till 1995 we remembered the 50th anniversary of the Second World War. In the Bible the fiftieth year is the Year of Jubilee, but changes and deliverance are not happening automatically. We read in the book of Daniel, that he paid attention to the prophecy from Jeremiah, that after 70 years the captivity in Babylon would be finished. Daniel 10, 12: ***"Do not be afraid, Daniel, since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard and I have come in response to them."***

Every promise needs the response of a person or a group of believers. Through the book of Daniel, I understood that we must repent on behalf of our families, our churches and our people. Daniel made himself available to stand in the gap as a priest although he was not from a priestly tribe, but from a family of kings. He understood that someone needed to respond to the prophecy and made himself available in confession, prayer and fasting. He humbled himself before the Lord and we read that the Lord sent his angel Gabriel to him.

In the whole Bible the angel Gabriel is only sent to three people: to Mary, Daniel and Zacharias. Only Mary and Daniel received a very encouraging word.

Daniel 10, 12: ***"Daniel, you who are highly esteemed."***

And to Mary: Luke 1, 28: ***"Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."***

To Zacharias he said: Luke 1, 20 ***"And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."***

Later, I wrote down the thoughts about Daniel's repentance in a little booklet. It is amazing that the Lord did inform Daniel only about the future and did not mention anything about the guilt of Israel from the past. Daniel did not hide the sins of Israel before the Lord. We see through the life of Daniel: If repentance takes place about the sins of the past, the Lord will release revelation about His redemptive purposes for the future. He will not reveal real prophecy if we don't bring the sins of our people in a priestly way before Him. Some people are afraid that we are only looking backwards if we confess the sins of our people, but the opposite is true. We will be released for the future if we confess the sins of the past. This is a danger especially in some free churches, because they often miss an historical understanding of church history and just relate to the beginning of "their" church. They think: 'there was Jesus and his disciples, then there was a long time of nothing, and now we are there'. The truth is that we are in a spiritual chain of continuous blessings, but also in a chain of spiritual guilt, and God is looking for people who take responsibility in a spiritual way.

We read in the book of Revelation 1, 6: "***...and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen***". We are all called to be priests before our Lord. He wants us to be concerned and involved in His_Kingdom purposes.

In 1994 I prepared repentance services in all the former concentration camps in Germany and Austria. Daniel Yahav, a son of a Holocaust survivor from Auschwitz, came with me to all the meetings in West Germany. We had a prayer meeting for repentance in the former concentration camp Neuengamme near Hamburg, in Bergen- Belsen near Hanover, in Flössenburg near Regensburg and in Dachau, where Pastor Aschoff led the meeting. Daniel also visited Auschwitz with me, and it was his first time in the camp. His father had suffered there. Benjamin Berger came with me to all the former camps in East Germany and Austria, which are Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen in Berlin, Dora-Mittelbau near Nordhausen, Buchenwald near Weimar, and Mauthausen

in Upper Austria. Many people confessed that even though they had been living close to these former concentration camps they had never visited these places or asked for forgiveness.

We felt that something was moving but also that we needed to get deeper. Therefore, in May 1995 I prepared a prayer and fasting week in the city of Oswiecim (Auschwitz). For many of us this was a most profound experience---being together for nine days at this place of death and destruction. We had no program prepared and spent much time in prayer. When you see the tremendous size of this killing ground in Auschwitz, you are shocked. Sometimes it is hard to pray, and the question will arise: How could this have happened and where was God during that time? We were speechless, and therefore met in small groups to share how the Holy Spirit could lead us on. The Lord granted us many prayers of repentance with tears, as we remembered the tragedy that had happened there. 72 people came to fast and pray with us for a week and another 60 people joined us for the last three days. In the Jewish block 27 in Auschwitz 1, was an inscription ***"The blood of your brother Abel is crying out from the earth."*** (Gen 4) In Auschwitz you feel that the innocent blood is crying out from the earth. We read from the letter to the Hebrews 12 Verse 24: ***"But you have come ... to JESUS the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."***

The blood of Jesus speaks louder and better and calls for mercy, when we repent. During this week in May 1995 we also met a group of 700 young Israelis. As they saw the expedition in Auschwitz 1 many of them fell and had an emotional breakdown. Some of our group had the courage to go over to them and ask for forgiveness. Much later we heard by accident that a young girl shared in Israel: "We met in Auschwitz some Christians from Germany who asked for forgiveness. Now we have hope again for the future of Israel and Germany." We understood that many people need to visit the former Concentration Camp in Auschwitz and receive there a spirit of repentance and deliverance from a humanistic worldview. In the end of this prayer and fasting week the Lord showed

me that we should continue with those weeks of prayer and fasting in Israel, the land of resurrection for the Jewish state and where the beginning of the early church had taken place. We met several times a year for prayer and fasting days and in 1997 I prepared a week of prayer and fasting in Rome. It was in our heart to pray, in Rome, that the glory of the Lord would return to Jerusalem. In the 70th year after Christ, it was not only the menorah that was brought from Jerusalem to Rome, but also the way in which the 'church from the nations' related to Peter, Paul and Mary, giving the impression that they were not Jews, but now belonged to 'the church from the nations'. We also prayed for the restoration of the church to her Jewish roots and to Jerusalem. We can only encourage having times of prayer and to fasting in a group together, because of the clear leading of the Holy Spirit, as we see it in Acts 13 Verse 2: ***"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."***

In Acts, this little group of five people prayed together, serving the Lord without any pre-prepared program. They simply wanted to serve the Lord. Therefore, the Holy Spirit was free to confirm a calling He had already given to Paul. It is not important to whom the Holy Spirit spoke, but that it was recognized clearly as a word of God. Today you find almost no conference where the program and speakers have not been planned. If we are dealing with very settled and old manifestations in our church and society, we can come to a breakthrough if a group is dedicated to pray and to fast. Many people also receive a clear calling in times of prayer and fasting.

Sadly, the relationship today between the 'Churches in the nations' and Israel has been already distorted in the very early church history. If we study Romans 11, we understand that Paul is warning the believers from the nations not to get into a proud attitude towards Israel. He is asking: Romans 11: Verse 1: ***"Did God reject his people? By no means!" (Verse 1) Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world,***

and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! (Verse 11+12) For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" (Verse 1)

Romans 11, 18 *"Do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you."* Verse 20 *"Do not be arrogant but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either."*

If we disconnect from our spiritual roots, which is the people of Israel, we also lose our real identity and develop a pseudo Christian culture, which is founded in the Greek thinking instead of the Hebrew. After Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70 A.D., the Church of the Nations felt that now God had confirmed the rejection of the Jewish people and they started to teach that the church in the nations had replaced Israel. In addition, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council, decided in the year 90 A.D. in Yavne, that a Jew, who confessed Jesus as the Messiah, was not recognized as Jew any longer. Until that time the messianic Jews had still taken part of the Jewish services in the synagogues. The growing Church among the Gentiles also took a step that a Jew, who confessed Jesus, needed to be disconnected from his Jewish heritage. All of this brought the messianic Jews into a very difficult situation so that they lost their Jewish identity. The church from the nations passed on a wrong understanding about God's covenant relationship and his character of faithfulness. It was thought that God had divorced Israel and entered into a new covenant; which was the church and the nations. This is an opposite statement of the word of God. Romans **11 Verse 28:** *"but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable."* In 2 Timothy 2, 12 Paul also says: *"If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself"*.

Because of the teaching from the Gentile church of replacement theology, the sickness of continuous separation entered. The first Gentile church separated themselves from the Jews, and later the Orthodox Church from the Catholics. It continued as the Protestant church returned to the simple Gospel of justification by faith. But it did not stop there because then came the Baptist Church and the Pentecostal church

and every new revival separated from the previous church. Anti-Semitism and racism entered the church and opened the door for centuries of murder and war even among so-called Christian nations. The first Church fathers Johannes Chrysostom's and Augustin's were already teaching that Synagogues were a dwelling place for demons and that it would be good to burn the Jewish prayer books.

Because church history is still influencing the situation today, we are called to repent and to stand with the Jewish people.

Shalom!

Christa

Testimony of Christa Behr, Part II

My thoughts are not written in a chronological order, but assigned to different topics.

As I shared already in Part I, I prepared a first service of repentance in 1993, in a former concentration camp in Bergen Belsen near Hannover. One year later for the first time I visited the camp in Auschwitz together with one of our pastors, Reuven Berger, from Jerusalem. We were speechless because of this unbelievable crime, and I felt like frozen in all my emotions. I wanted to cry, but I was not able to do so. Shortly after this I visited Pastor Friedrich Aschoff who at that time was a pastor in Kaufering near the former concentration camp Dachau. He had been very impressed by a time of repentance at a KZ-cemetery in 1989. Victims from the former camp in Dachau near Munich were buried there. He thought about how to bring this spirit of repentance and reconciliation into the Nations that had been suffering so much under the Nazi Regime from Germany during the Second World War. He asked me where to begin with our repentance? Since I had just come from Auschwitz and was totally occupied by these impressions, I said: "Auschwitz - because we have sinned the most against the Jewish people and Auschwitz is the darkest place on earth". Today maybe I would say that the darkest place for me is the extermination camp in Treblinka. Pastor Aschoff was immediately ready for us to prepare together the first trip to Auschwitz in February 1994. Ilan Zamir and Benjamin Berger were the first Messianic Jews that accompanied us during this prayer tour. Ilan Zamir was the leader of the Bible School in Jerusalem and I had come in contact with him through Pastor Gleiss from Bendorf in Germany. Many years before, in Germany, Pastor Gleiss had collected money for a kidney transplant Ilan had to undergo. Ilan had a genetic disease that only appears among Sephardic Jews: "Familiar Mediterranean Fever". This disease destroys the blood vessels and also the kidneys. In a miraculous way God had given Ilan another 15 years, after he was, for a few minutes, clinically

dead. For many people, and also for me, Ilan was a very special example of a very precious brother in the Lord. I never felt a condescending attitude towards me as a German or as a woman, because he lived in the spirit of reconciliation.

Through him I got to know John Dawson and his ministry of reconciliation. After this I got to know the beginnings of the ministry, which is now known under the name of TJCII.

In the beginning many meetings were connected to the topic of repentance and reconciliation. Twice we had meetings in Switzerland. At one of these meetings the topic was repentance over the guilt of the Nazi Spirit. At this meeting David Demian from Canada received a clear calling to stand up for repentance towards Israel in Canada. He was able to bring changes into the Christian churches, and brought to their attention the episode of the St. Louis Ship, full with Holocaust survivors from Europe, which was also rejected by the Canadian government during the Second World War. The government of Canada responded in a deep way with a clear confession about this sad history, when they came to Israel, together with the Canadian Rabbis.

At the second meeting in Switzerland the topic of repentance and reconciliation was also related to Africa. At this meeting I asked if there had ever been a repentance meeting prepared about the so-called Berlin-Congo-Conference. Years before I had heard from Pastor Paul Gitwaza in Rwanda about the Berlin-Congo-Conference, where the whole continent of Africa had been divided like a cake among the colonial powers in 1884. The Berlin-Congo-Conference took place from November 1884 until February 1885, which means 4 months. Since I had been the only European at the conference I asked for forgiveness regarding Africa for this terrible guilt, which is still influencing the current wars between Rwanda and Congo. Some of the participants in Switzerland said: We know about it, but never prepared a repentance meeting about this historical sin of our Nations. Since the effects of these

lineal drawn borders in Berlin in 1884 are still there today, we have to deal with this sin. The tribes living together for hundreds of years were not respected and the wars between Rwanda and Congo are still connected to these decisions of the colonial powers. We sat together for the first time at the table and prepared a meeting in Berlin. No African was asked or consulted at this conference in Berlin 1884. Later on I will report more on the topic of Africa.

Our prayer journeys with Ilan Zamir, who was at that time the chairman of the Toward Jerusalem Council II brought us also to Spain and Turkey. In Spain we asked for forgiveness for the terrible guilt of the Catholic Church towards the Jews in the time of the Spanish Inquisition.

In the ruins of an old church in Nicaea, which is located in Turkey today, we asked for forgiveness for the attitude of the church from the Nations in the 7th century towards the biblical feasts of Israel, when they purposely separated themselves from their Jewish roots. Back then they decided that it would be unacceptable for the church from the Nations to celebrate their feasts according to the Jewish calendar. So, they developed a new, Gregorian church calendar, that follows the sun. Many steps in church history led to the deepening of the chasm between Israel and the Church.

Another prayer meeting took place in Yavne, Israel. In the year 90 A.D. the Sanhedrin had come to the decision that a Jew who believes in Jesus is not to be considered as a Jew anymore. In Yavne we also had a very good time of prayer for the restoration of the divine unity and reconciliation between men and women in the synagogue and the church. Perhaps many do not know that the Orthodox Jews say in their morning prayer: "Thank you Lord, that you have not created me as a woman." The woman however prays: "Thank you Lord that you have created me as I am." In the Middle East the woman has a very subordinate role, not only in Judaism, but also, and especially, in the Muslim culture. During this prayer trip the leading of the Holy Spirit was very profound and encouraging through prophetic words, prayers and a spirit of repentance.

There were many spontaneous contributions and impressions. Ilan Zamir was an important contact person for many Messianic Jews and churches from the nations.

Since Ilan agreed to accompany me during another prayer trip to Auschwitz, I wanted to visit him in February. During my visit I realized that he was very sick, and I had to call an ambulance on the very same day. Ilan spent the last two months of his life in the hospital. I had the privilege to be with him daily during those last two months of his life, together with his mother and his sister Anat. In his deep suffering you could recognize clearly the nature of our Messiah Yeshua. Some people questioned me about my commitment for him and regrettably I told him about it. He began to weep and said “people don’t understand, I have no one who cares for me on a daily base now.” From then on it was clear to me, that this assignment had priority for me at this time. One time I brought him worship music to the Hospital. He knew all the songs very well and started to sing along, and weeping he said: “Yeshua, I love you.” For me it was as if the Lord was standing right in front of him. During the last weeks in the intensive care unit, his blood vessels ruptured inwardly and outwardly. Ilan’s face looked like the face of Jesus in the movie “The Passion”. It was a deep experience for me to see that very well-known leaders can be alone in their last hours, as we also read this about Paul in **2. Timothy 4:16-17: “At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength...”**

I am very thankful for his life and that I got to know this brother, Ilan Zamir.

These weeks of prayer and fasting, which were started in Auschwitz in 1995, continued as smaller meetings in Israel. In 1997 we visited Rome with 54 people for a week of prayer and fasting. We prayed in Rome at the Arch of Titus, that the glory of God (Kavod) would come back to Jerusalem. It also was our concern that the church in the Nations would recognize the Jewish identity of the apostles Peter, Paul and Mary, the mother of Yeshua. After some difficulties we finally came to an agreement, that the church in heaven is already completed, yet the church on earth has sinned as we can easily recognize this in church

history. Therefore, we spent much time in repentance, and for the confession of sin towards the Jewish people in our tragic church history.

In 1998 we had a very important prayer time in Kiriyat Ha Yearim where about 60 participants came. In this week of prayer and fasting our concern was the unity of the church from the Nations, with the believers in Israel. We built an altar where Israel took a central place and where everyone added his stone for his Nation, while praying for the restoration of this relationship. Our time of worship in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was unforgettable. Without any disturbance we could worship the Lord for one hour in the chapel of the cross. As we were on the way out the police came and asked us to stop singing, because spontaneous singing is forbidden there! During that week the Lord also put on our hearts the painful question: How can we celebrate the Lord's Supper together? This question was also our main concern in the coming years. At that time our small leadership team consisted of 4 people: Benjamin and Reuven Berger, Peter Hocken and myself.

In the following year, 1999, we prayed together in a catholic house for pilgrims in "Maison d' Abraham" in Ras-al- Amud, on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. We paid attention to the prophetic word from Ezekiel 37, the bringing together of the two sticks, one for Israel and one for Ephraim. **Ezekiel 37: 15-17: "Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions. Then take another stick and write on it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.' Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand."**

We had wonderful times of worship on top of the roof, waving flags and dancing with a view over the Temple Mount. In that year it was very painful, that we couldn't celebrate the Lord's Supper with each other, out of respect for the catholic understanding of the Lord's Supper. But now we asked our catholic brethren to fast from the Lord's Supper, like we, as Messianic Jews and Protestants have already been doing for many

years. We felt it was better not to celebrate disunity concerning the Lords Supper, in a week of prayer and fasting for the unity of the church.

Finally, in the year 2000 it was possible for us to celebrate the Lord's Supper together at Christ Church in the Old City of Jerusalem. Messianic Jews led us in this service and we felt the deep longing of the Lord for this meal of unity with the Lord in His whole Body.

For Pentecost Sunday we chose a special place for our meeting at the cave of Zedekiah, also known as Solomon's quarry. Nowadays, the place is a worldwide centre of the Freemasons. This cave is located on the northern side of the Old City wall in Jerusalem near to the Damascus Gate. We read from Ezekiel Chapter 8 verses 3 to 17.

In the year 2001 we met again in the Old City in Jerusalem. On May 1st, in the morning, I read a word from **Isaiah 7 verses 10 to 16**. ***Moreover, the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Curds and honey, He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings."***

I said to the group that by this word I was encouraged to ask for a sign today, and if we do not ask for it we just weary the Lord. On this morning we came into unusual depths of repentance and reconciliation and I cannot really describe it with a few words. The deep wounds of the past, especially from the Holocaust, came into the wonderful comforting light and love of God. The Lord gave the members from the church in the Nations among us, the grace of deep repentance, and we felt the pain of the Lord over the terrible history towards the Jewish people. In the afternoon at 3 p.m. unusual heavy rain fell, especially in the Old City of Jerusalem and Benjamin said: This is the sign Christa asked for. The next

morning, they announced in the news, that it hadn't rained like this on May 1st for the last 100 years.

Reconciliation and TJCII

I have known some members of TJCII for many years, like Johannes Fichtenbauer, from the time when the international intercessory prayer movement started in Vienna, Austria. Peter Hocken was my guest in Jerusalem at his first visit in Israel. I got to know Brian Cox at a conference in Brighton 1991. A Lutheran pastor, Denis Peterson, introduced us with the words that we should be connected---since we had a similar calling in regards to reconciliation. I visited Brian in 1993 in Santa Barbara in California and shared in his church about Israel. He accepted my invitation for a meeting of repentance in the former concentration camp in Berlin-Sachsenhausen. The Lord touched him very deeply and Brian began to weep, and he also received a calling for a ministry of reconciliation between the Church and Israel.

Some years later Peter Hocken wrote a little booklet for "Towards Jerusalem Council II". While reading through, some points came to my mind and I wrote my thoughts down in 11 points. I am thankful for the changes which were made in the new edition and therefore I want to mention only that Point 3 referred to the acceptance of spiritual leaders from Jerusalem. Benjamin and Reuven Berger encouraged me at that time to give this point an important place. Since Ilan went to be with the Lord there was no pastor from Jerusalem anymore in the leadership team. Shortly after I sent out this E-mail, Ofer Amitai, Benjamin Berger and Marcel Rebai were invited to the meeting of TJCII. A few years ago, at a meeting of TJCII in Gnadenal Germany, I felt that I could not continue as a part of TJCII, but I still have very good friends there, especially among the intercessors from Austria.

When I heard about the new vision of TJCI that Marty Waldman had received, some question came to me related to this vision. Over the years I got more clarity about my concerns. As far as I understood the vision of Marty and the executive committee from TJCI, a second Council will be prepared, where the Church from the Nations would accept, approve, release and bless the Messianic Jews in their specific Jewish identity. They see a connection to the First Council of the Apostles in Acts 15. That is the reason why they call it "Toward Jerusalem Counsel II".

At that time, in Acts chapter 15, the Messianic Jews had written a letter and sent it to the churches in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia through Paul and Barnabas. But the first Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 was held after the Holy Spirit had given a clear spiritual breakthrough. In Acts 10 and 11 we read that Peter received a vision: he saw a cloth with unclean animals coming down from heaven. **Acts 11: 7- 9: "And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.'"**

This vision prepared Peter to respond positively to the invitation of the centurion Cornelius and to visit his home. Otherwise he would not have been ready to go there. Before Peter finished his speech, the Holy Spirit already fell on all who gathered in the house of Cornelius and they received the Holy Spirit in the same way as the Jews at Pentecost. **Acts 10:44- 48: "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days."**

Because of this experience Peter and the Apostles made their statements at the Jerusalem Council in **Acts 15: 7-12: "And when there had**

been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: 'Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So, God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.' Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles."

This supernatural spiritual breakthrough was the foundation of the first Jerusalem Council and therefore no discussion was needed anymore. Therefore, the Apostles could write and address in their letter to the church in the Nations. **Acts 15:28: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..."** Although the Jewish believers that had come with Peter *were astonished* that the Holy Spirit had been poured out over them in the same way as to the Jews, there was no arguing anymore, because the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit made it very clear.

I think that we should expect and pray for a supernatural breakthrough of the Holy Spirit regarding the relationship between Messianic Jews, and believers from the Nations. This expectation, and these prayers, turn our focus and hope to a supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit and would exclude any human manipulation or interpretation. We see in Acts chapter 15 at the first Council of the Apostles, that it was the Holy Spirit who brought forth such a change of mind and gave a new understanding to the leaders and the congregations. Such a breakthrough would release a worldwide revival of real unity from all believers in Yeshua in love and in the truth. It would be recognized and accepted from the whole body of Christ as a clear move of the Holy Spirit. Then we could expect the same reaction as in **Acts Chapter 15:31 "When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement."**

During the last 40 to 50 years more and more Jews have come to a living faith in Yeshua as their Messiah all over the world. It is a clear

move of the Holy Spirit, and the church from the Nations cannot ignore this fact any longer. The Lord Himself will continue to release and reveal their identity as Messianic Jews, as we pray and seek the Lord in this matter. It is very moving to hear some of their testimonies, how the Lord is bringing Jewish people in a wonderfully and supernatural way to the knowledge of Yeshua as their Messiah. Therefore, the Messianic Jewish movement is not dependent on acceptance, or approval, through a council of churches from the Nations, because it is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

The question for the church from the Nations is rather: To what extent can we hold on to our old denominational identity, in light of God's supernatural intervention, which brings forth the resurrection of the Messianic Jews own identity? Does our identity as the Church from the Nations, change through the acknowledgement of the existence of the Messianic-Jewish fellowships and their identity? We, as the Church from the Nations cannot any longer act as if there is no one to talk to as a partner. When a woman or a man gets married, she or he, is giving up their old identity. Both entered into a completely new and life-changing reality. A strong prayer movement could trigger a breakthrough in this Church relationship.

For the Lord Yeshua the right relation between Jews and Gentiles is so important, that he Himself went to the cross for it, to create in Himself the one new man. It is a creative act of Yeshua. Paul writes in *Ephesians 2: 13-22*: ***“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in***

whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

The gospel went out from Jerusalem by the Messianic Jews. They were called to bring the good news to the Gentiles. Sadly, the Gentile church is not bringing back a pure gospel to Israel, because of her terrible history and her traditions which are mixed with the spirit of humanism. We are dealing with the Replacement Theology. I am very thankful for the pioneer work that TJCII has accomplished to confront the so-called Replacement Theology in the traditional denominations in Europe and also in Africa and I appreciate also all the intercessors who pray for TJCII, and that the Kingdom of God will be manifested through this ministry.

A prayer movement that is connected to the revelation of the Apostle Paul could release a greater clarity about the God-given identity of Messianic Jews in relation to the Church from the Nations. ***Galatians 6: 15-16: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."***

We pray that our Messianic brethren will be able to lead us in the sharing of the Lord's Supper. Prophetic people and meetings can go beyond our respected traditions and teachings, especially if our traditions are not in conformity with the word of God. Sometimes a small group is able to live in its biblical conviction, praying and hoping that one day the Lord will open a door for many.

I think it is important that all Israel-related initiatives take a clear stand concerning the actual life-threatening situation of the Jewish people in Israel. Our repentance of our sad church history has to bring forth fruits of repentance in our time. The current life-threatening hatred by Iran and Islamic fundamentalists towards Israel is very alarming. Sadly, many Christians cannot see the attacks on Israel, and on the whole

western world. As we hear the speech of Benjamin Netanyahu before the council of the UN, we can understand it is not in the first place a political matter, but a spiritual one that should concern us Christian. The hatred from Muslim-dominated governments towards Israel in the Middle East cannot be explained in a human way.

In the book of Daniel, we read about the enormous battles in the invisible realm. **Daniel 10: 13-14 says: “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.”** We can make a connection to the request in the Lord’s Prayer **Matthew 6:10: “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”.**

Through prayer the church has a part in this spiritual battle. We also have many opportunities to put one-sided information about Israel right, in our society. To stand with Israel could also cost a lot again in the future. We also need a clear teaching about the Millennium, according to which Jesus will reign from Jerusalem over the whole world for one thousand years. The Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem have a special role in this time. How could we otherwise understand the great hatred against Israel, if we do not realize the work of the enemies of God, who attempt to destroy Israel and the plan of the Lord God, in the past and present? The church needs more revelation about God’s eternal plan of salvation, concerning the historical anti-Semitism and today’s hatred towards the people of Israel. In my booklet I wrote some bible studies about this issue, according to the book of Esther and the life of the apostle Paul. This hatred is still fed by the same demonic powers we saw at work in the time of the Second World War. These thoughts have moved my heart in the last years, and that is why I wanted to share them with you.

Christa Behr

Testimony of Christa Behr, Part III

My call to Africa

It is so wonderful that God never forgets any promise he has given. By 1976, I had already been a bible teacher for 2 years in public schools in Haid in Upper Austria. At this time, I believed that I had a call to Africa and told this to a Lutheran Pastor. I had forgotten it for almost twenty years, but after many years when I had been in Africa it came to my mind again. First, I visited Egypt and then Ethiopia together with Jean Knox from Canada and a Messianic-Jewish pastor from Ethiopia.

We were helping Ethiopian Jews to come out of prison through a financial gift from Austrians. They suffered under Anti-Semitism in villages near Gonda and had been in prison for some years without any possibility to defend themselves in a court case. During this journey I got to know Dr Shitayea who is until today a key person in helping poor Jewish families in the area of Gonda. She wrote a report about the terrible situation of some Ethiopian Jewish families, who actually were starving from hunger. Because of her letter, Yad Ruth (a group from Hamburg, Germany) started a food program and is feeding 400 poor families every month.

Pastor Luis, a Tutzi from Rwanda, visited us in 1995 in Jerusalem. He told us terrible things about the genocide, which just had taken place in 1994 in Rwanda. One year later I visited him in Rwanda and got to know Pastor Paul Gitwaza. He is now the senior pastor of Zion's Church in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. At that time, he was responsible for a national intercession-movement in Rwanda. Together with him I prepared prayer and fasting weeks in Kigali. Benjamin Berger and I came

two times for these weeks from Israel. We gave a testimony of reconciliation as a Jew and a German living in forgiveness and unity. During the first week of prayer and fasting we experienced an attack of the so-called “voodoo-cult”. Pastor Paul lost his first-born son in the middle of that prayer week, but he came right back after the funeral of his son to our meetings. In the last days we experienced a breakthrough in repentance and reconciliation between believers from the Hutu and Tutzi tribe. In December 2000 we could celebrate reconciliation between the different churches and tribes in the Football stadium of Kigali.

After these meetings in Rwanda, doors opened for me to share about Israel and the importance of reconciliation in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Congo, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa.

I want to share one experience in Tanzania with you. Gottfried Lema had invited me to speak about Israel at a conference near to the Mountain of Kilimanjaro. At this time there was a great drought in that area and the cows of the Massai tribe died on the fields. One could feel the enormous suffering of the people in Tanzania. During the conference I was invited to share at a school that is supported by a Pentecostal Church and led by a female pastor. 430 students between the ages 12 to 20 lived there and received education. They gathered to hear my testimony about repentance in Germany towards the Jewish people and reconciliation we had experienced with Israel. I told them about the opportunity to repent for the sins of our nations, even if we are young, as we can see it in the life of the prophet Daniel.

After my sharing a teacher stood up and said to the students: “In the year 1976 the former president took sides with Yasser Arafat so much that he called the people of Tanzania to go on the streets to demonstrate against Israel and to curse the Jews. Sadly, she had also participated in this demonstration, but now recognized that believers in Yeshua should bless Israel and repent for this historical sin in Tanzania. She also said that the economy of Tanzania went down the road from that time on.” After this

she invited all 430 students to ask the God of Israel, our Father in Jesus Christ for forgiveness. All the students stood up, turned their face towards the wall or knelt down and began loud prayers, crying out for forgiveness for the sin of Tanzania towards Israel. Never had I seen such a response before and I began to cry. Back at the conference, the conviction was growing in me that we should ask for rain before the end of our conference.

On the last day of our meetings around 3 o'clock it not only started to rain, but water was pouring down from heaven. They told me later that the rain lasted for some weeks and everybody knew that this was a response by the God of Israel to their repentance towards Israel. The blessing of rain was released for this area near to the Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Africa and the Berlin-Congo Conference

Our first meeting regarding the Berlin-Congo conference was planned in Switzerland and took place in Berlin. At the same time, I wanted to prepare a prayer and repentance meeting at Wewelsburg near Paderborn in Germany, the spiritual centre of the former SS in Nazi-Germany. From there the Nazi SS wanted to rule the whole world in the so-called millennial empire. The plans were already prepared and the constructions should be finished in the year 1964. We thank God that these plans were not carried out because the end of the "Second World War" left a different reality. For this repentance meeting I invited my friend Pastor Langton Gatsi from Zimbabwe. He has a lot of experience in intercession and spiritual warfare. Because he would have been already in Germany at that time, I invited Langton also to join our preparation team for the repentance meetings related to the so-called Berlin-Congo Conference. If we had not invited an African brother to be with us, we would have repeated the same sin from 1884.

The colonial powers made all their decisions about the whole continent of Africa, without consulting any African. In the end, Langton was able to come to our meeting in Berlin, but not to the prayer meeting at Wewelsburg. In this way Langton became our main contact person at this reconciliation meetings with Africa, and we are very thankful that we can work in reconciliation together.

8: At our second meeting in Berlin I brought some copies of an article from "The Jerusalem Post" with me about the situation in Israel. I wanted to give them to some members of our group, but this displeased some brothers from Europe. They said Israel should not be an issue in our reconciliation meetings about Africa. Although our African brothers and sisters had much revelation about Israel, it was not possible to give Israel the rightful place as the first Nation, because of disunity among the European participants. In my opinion this could be a spiritual problem concerning the ministry of reconciliation because Israel and the Nations are in a relationship as we read in Deuteronomy 32,8: ***"When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel."***

When we give Israel the right place, our nations are also receiving the right place and we as nations can enter into a reconciled relationship with one another.

We had a meeting in Berlin with representatives from different African countries and a few years later in Harare in Zimbabwe. The guilt towards Israel and Africa is so enormous that we can only ask for mercy and for opportunities to be a blessing for Israel and Africa. We pray as Europeans for grace to bring fruits of repentance. Taking over the entire continent of Africa was caused by our prideful attitude as colonial powers. We left tremendous wounds after us. We continue to pray for healing and restoration for the whole African continent.

I was invited to share about Israel two times at a prayer conference in Kinshasa/ Congo prepared by Pastor Samuel Dincajki. Since I was the

only white person from Europe, I humbled myself under the great guilt of King Leopold II from Belgium. His ancestors were Germans and he was responsible for the killing of millions of Congolese. Through the book “The Ghost of King Leopold the II” Congolese Christians got more information about this terrible time under French and Belgian occupation. We wept over the great suffering caused by the colonial powers. This was only a small beginning and I pray that the repentance and reconciliation with Congo and all the other African Nations will continue until we see a breakthrough.

The call to stay unmarried for the Lord

As I came to know the Lord, I understood from my councillors that if Yeshua is my Lord, He will also have a word for me regarding the questions to whom I would marry and in which county I should live in the future. Many believers do not even ask the question if there is a call for them to stay single for the Lord. Even so Jesus himself speaks very clearly about this call in Matthew 12: ***“There are men who from their birth have been disabled from marriage, others who have been so disabled by men, and others who have disabled themselves for the sake of the Kingdom of the Heavens. He who is able to receive (accept) this let him receive (accept) it.”***

Also, Paul speaks about this calling in connection with the times we live in. As I heard about it, I understood that there is a price to pay and I wept a little bit, but then I said yes to His ways. At my 50th birthday I asked the Lord to give me a clear answer about my calling, if I was supposed to stay single for the rest of my life. I was thinking about this issue since I became a believer at the age of 18 and I was open not to marry. But I did not want to make an early final decision, because I’ve met too many people in Austria, a Catholic country, where young believers made too early a vow not to get married but could not keep it. I saw their dilemma and I think it would have been better for them if they had waited a little longer to make the final decision. Whenever I had the opportunity

to get married with someone, I prayed over it and every time the Lord gave me a clear answer, which was no. Since my house in Jerusalem is too big for one person, I wanted to know at that time who was supposed to live with me there. The word of Jesus from the gospel of Matthew 19, 12 spoke to my heart especially: ***“He who is able to receive (accept) this let him receive (accept) it.”***

So, I was thinking about the question if I could accept to stay in this calling for the rest of my life. After having lived single for the Lord for the last 50 years it was not hard for me to answer with a yes. My answer to stay single was not related to join to an existing community. I did not enter into the other so-called Catholic vows, like obedience and poverty. Imre Szabo had a prophetic word for me that encouraged me to affirm this decision with a celebration. I prepared this celebration on the Mount Zion for my 50th birthday and invited my friends from Israel and from abroad. After some questions from friends about the way and the timing of this celebration I asked the Lord again for a confirmation and I received a word from Psalm 116: 18-19: ***“I will pay my vows to the LORD now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!”***

With these verses I felt myself encouraged to go ahead, because they confirmed to me the time and the place. I had already prepared the celebration in the midst of Jerusalem, on the Mount Zion and it would be in the presence of all His people, because I had invited my friends. On this day a word was given to me twice. Already in the morning Vera, a good friend of mine shared this word with me from Isaiah 54:1-2 and a couple from Austria during our celebration. ***“Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,’ says the LORD. ‘Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.’”*** This chapter is in the first place a promise to Jerusalem but I received it as something for myself personally. For me it is not a question of value how the Lord is calling us to be single or married, but of personal leading. Mary was married and also the first of the Apostles, Peter. Paul is warning us about the teaching not to get married, because it could be a

teaching of evil spirits. 1. Timothy 4, 3. It seems to me that there is a group of people who are looking for new ways for community life, fitting for our time and circumstances.

Our meetings with Messianic Jews, Catholics and Protestant Christians

In 1996 we started a monthly meeting with Messianic Jews, Catholics and Protestants. During winter-time we meet in my house, and during the summer in the garden of Benjamin and Ruben's garden. A friendship has developed among the participants and we appreciate this gathering so much. We have a time for sharing, and singing; we pray and listen to bible teaching. We finish with a meal and with a little time of fellowship.

Our monthly meetings with the Messianic Jews, Arabs and brethren from the Nations

Since about 1992 we have a monthly meeting together with Messianic Jews, Arab brothers and sisters, and Christians from the nations in Jerusalem. It is so pleasant to experience friendship and unity in prayer in our tensed political situation. Our identity in the Lord Jesus Christ is stronger than the political agenda.

Guests

In the last 20 years we could accommodate many guests. Some of them have found a connection to Israel in this way, and also they can relate better what the Lord is doing here in Israel. We experience how a visit to Israel imparts a deep understanding about the country and about the Jewish roots of many. Lately the number of visitors has been increased, because I have more space in the house through the help of our Israel Friends from Saxony. Literally, my tent has been extended in the last years.

Holocaust survivors

We are especially grateful for the friendships we have with local Holocaust survivors, who are able to live in friendship with us as Germans. With three of them (Esther Mannheim, her sister Yehudit Kriegel and Ruth Zaks) we could register an official trust.

Christa Behr

Depression and how to fight it

We easily found out that believers can have depression and I was looking for some answers in the Bible related to this issue.

How can we recognize depression? What can we do about it and how to fight against it? Where can we find answers in the Bible what could help us to overcome depression?

I think that Elijah had to fight with depression. Depressive thoughts came after intensive battles and a great victory. The story of Elijah in 1. King 19, 1-3 tells us: ***“Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So, Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.” Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there”***. Elijah did not really want to die because if he wanted to die, he could have run right into the hands of Jezebel, because she wanted to kill him anyhow. He was running for his life and said to the Lord in verse 4: ***“I have had enough, Lord, (...) Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.”***

Jezebel was swearing by other gods (idols). The prophet should not have been either impressed or intimidated by the words of Jezebel, because he had just proved that there is no other god, only the God of Israel.

How is the Lord helping Elijah to come out of this valley in his life? He lets Elijah sleep and eat, and again sleep and eat. The Lord is also asking him two times: “what are you doing here?” 1. King 19, 5-9: ***“Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” So he got up***

and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night". Two times Elijah is telling the Lord the same story: "I am the only one who is left from the prophets and they want to kill me". The story of the depressed person is usually not giving us the whole picture, it can be very much one-sided. Still only the second time the Lord is correcting Elijah by telling him that he is not the only one who is left from God's people because God reserved for himself another 7000-faithful people as His remnant. I. Kings 19, 18: ***"Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him"***. For everyone who is in depression it is very important that he can tell someone how he feels. God is listening. Even so if he had to repeat his story two times, God only wanted to give him the opportunity to share what is on his heart.

The real answer is coming to Elijah as he meets the Lord again and He is giving him a new task by telling him whom to anoint as the next prophet and king over Israel. I. King 19, 15-16: ***"The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet"***. Not in the storm but in the quiet wind, the Lord was talking to him again. With this new task the weight was lifted from the shoulders of Elijah as now he had Elisha, a real disciple, with him to help.

We find also in the New Testament someone who could have been on the depressive side. Thomas is one of the 12 disciples. As Jesus tells the disciples that Lazarus has died, Thomas just answers: ***"Let us also go, that we may die with Him"*** - Luke 11, 16. In my opinion this is a statement of a person who has to fight with depression.

Depressive people leave often the fellowship and like to stay by themselves. After Jesus died and rose from the dead Thomas was not with the other disciples as the Lord revealed Himself on the first day of the

week. Jesus did not prepare an extra meeting for Thomas during the week. The Lord waited until Thomas changed his mind and was again with the disciples on the next Sunday. Then the Lord answered his question.

John 20, 24-29: *“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: “We have seen the Lord.” So, he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of His nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

According to the tradition Thomas was the apostle who brought the gospel to India and died as a martyr. It is encouraging to know that also depressive people can overcome and serve the Lord in a wonderful way.

Sometime all of us have to go through a valley of the shadow of death, so it is important to know the different scriptures that could help us in these situations. One scripture which has helped me a lot is Romans 8, 28: ***“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose”***.

The same message we find in Philippians 4, 13: ***“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”***. How often we would love to say “I can’t do it”, but if we do it with the Lord, we can.

A lot of things are happening in everyone’s life. Some of them we do not understand, and some of them work out differently to our first thought. If we can receive His words in faith, we will be blessed.

I have met many brethren who got into trouble because, for some reasons they left the fellowship with other believers. Even so the letter to

the Hebrews says in Hebrews 10, 25: ***“not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the day approaching.”*** I think for all of us there are days of darkness.

As we look at the life of the apostle Paul, we can see what he himself had to go through. In I. Corinthians 1, 8 we read: ***“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers; about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.”***

We should never forget that there is an enemy, who would try to destroy our faith and love for our Lord.

Jesus is encouraging us to look beyond the circumstances and to receive our redemption. Luke 21, 28: ***“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”***

Christa Behr



CHRISTA BEHR

My name is Christa Behr and I was born in Germany. I lived and worked 18 Years in Austria where I was a bible teacher in public schools and led the youth work in the Lutheran Church in Salzburg. I have been living in Jerusalem now for 30 years. In 1981 during my second visit to Israel

I received a call to live here and arrived in Israel 1991 in the middle of the Golf War 10 years later. As a German and Austrian and because the Holocaust (Shoa) repentance towards the Jews and reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles is especially on my heart. I also believe, that the Church needs to come back to her Jewish roots and recognize that her foundations are in Jerusalem and Israel. I am a member of a local fellowship in Jerusalem and prepare regular prayer meetings related to reconciliation.

For the last 25 years I have visited annually former concentration camps in Poland and Germany with Germans and Israelis together

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