

## The planting of the Lord

Since their very inception as a nation, the Jewish people became aware of their calling --- to become "the planting of the Lord". It was for that very purpose that God brought them out of Egypt. Following their miraculous deliverance through the Red Sea, Moses and the children of Israel sang these words in Exodus 15:17:

*"You will bring them in and plant them  
In the mountain of Your inheritance,  
In the place, O Lord, which You have made  
For Your own dwelling,  
The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established."*



God's promise to plant the children of Israel in this land is repeated often in the Hebrew Scriptures. In both 2 Samuel 7: 10 and in 1 Chronicles 17:9 the Lord declares, "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more..."

Amos 9:15 echoes those same promises:

*"I will plant them in their land,  
And no longer shall they be pulled up  
From the land I have given them.'  
Says the LORD your God."*

Today, more than a third of the world's Jewish population are planted in their land. And as thousands more arrive every month, we are witnessing a modern day miracle. But if we look on the horizon with our natural eyes, we might begin to doubt God's promises. Will this planting process soon lose all momentum and come to a grinding halt? Logic would say, "why would anyone want to move to Israel when terrorism is now a daily threat, when war is increasingly a real possibility, not to mention a new round of economic shaking?"

But in spite of what we see with our natural eyes, this planting will continue, Why am I so sure? Because God's whole heart is consecrated to this great purpose. The Lord Himself declares in Jeremiah 32:12: "Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul." When God's whole heart and soul is in anything, we can then be positive He will bring it to pass.

As Jewish people finally recognize that God's whole heart is devoted to their restoration, their own hearts will return to Him. The Lord declares in Jeremiah 24:6, 7:

*"For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land' I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. 'Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.'*

We are still waiting for Israel's whole heart to return to God. But it will happen. God has promised.

Though the planting of the Jewish people in this Land is God's plan and purpose, it will not

happen without pain. In Jeremiah 32:41 the Lord says:

“I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.’ For thus says the LORD: ‘Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them.’”

God often uses pain to get our attention. C.S. Lewis once said. "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." Likewise, Israel's various calamities are not meant for destruction, but for discipline; to rouse the nation of Israel to their need for a Saviour.

In order that His people become "trees of righteousness" that bear good fruit, God must not only plant well, but prune well. The tree surgeon's instrument may inflict pain, but it is God's instrument to "bring on them all the good I have promised them."

What is our role in the body of Messiah during this painful pruning period? We share the Messiah's calling - to comfort Israel with the Messiah's comfort. In Isaiah 61:1,3 the Messiah Himself proclaims:

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me..."*

*... To comfort those who mourn in Zion,*

*To give them beauty for ashes,*

*The oil of joy for mourning The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;*

*That they may be called trees of righteousness,*

*The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."*

Recently we've been reawakened to our desperate need for the Holy Spirit. We have realized like never before that we need the Holy Spirit to minister in power. But there's another reason why we desperately need the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit to comfort the nation of Israel - especially at this critical hour when God is again planting His chosen people in their Promised Land.

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