

# KNOWLEDGE THAT LEADS TO HOLINESS

*"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all Holy conversation and godliness?"* **2 Peter 3:11** (AV)

## THE CALL TO PRAY FOR ISRAEL

What a tremendous calling is upon all of us who care about and love Israel! God has given us the Holy but heavy task of interceding for God's special nation and for the Body of Christ within that nation.

Jesus himself called on the Apostles to "watch and pray". We are surely commanded to keep our eyes on what is happening in our world with regard to Israel, so that we can then more intelligently and effectively pray for that very special people.

The bottom line of God's promises to Israel is far more than victory over their human enemies – it is surely that wonderful stated purpose of God that "All Israel shall be saved".

We all know that the ultimate fulfilment of that prophecy lies in the future – I believe and hope, in the near future. But it is at this hour that we need to intercede for a present fulfilment of that promise – that right now we should see many Jewish people, whether in Israel or the Diaspora, finding salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## THE SOURCE OF ALL SALVATION

We know that salvation can only come through Christ himself. Jesus said very plainly: *"No man cometh to the Father but*

*by me"*. Peter, that Jewish Apostle, who heard the Messiah say those words, spoke to his fellow-Jews: *"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (**Acts 4:12**).

Paul - that Hebrew of the Hebrews, said: *"Whosoever believeth on HIM shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek... whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (**Rom 10:11-13**). How we should be praying for Israel at this time that they may find salvation in Christ! And how can this salvation come to them? Again Paul says, *"How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"* (**Rom 10:14**).

Only the **proclamation of the Gospel can save Israel**. And that is why we are called to pray for the congregations of Messianic believers in Israel, that their testimony to their fellow-Jews should be heard. We can be thankful that **it is being heard**, because there is a gradual but progressive growth in numbers of Jews, who have found the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

Yes, Jews, just as well as Gentiles need to hear the good news of the Gospel in order to be saved. We certainly need to pray for the Israeli government and the IDF, but Israel's spiritual salvation will only come from faith in her true King, Yeshua the Messiah. No other salvation even approaches this in importance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR PRAYERS

In all of this we Gentile believers can participate in prayer and intercession, though we may perceive ourselves to be a minority, often despised by the majority in the church. A godly bishop of the Church of England once said, over a century ago, of true believers:

*“This is the church which does the work of Christ on earth. Its members are a little flock and few in number, one or two here & two or three there, a few in this district and a few in that. But these are they that shake the universe; who change the fortune of kingdoms by their prayers; these are they who are the active workers for spreading the knowledge of pure religion and undefiled; these are the lifeblood of the country, the shield, the defence, the stay and the support of any nation to which they belong”.*

When J. C. Ryle penned these words churchgoing in this country was the rule, not the exception. Today maybe 3% of people in Britain attend Christian worship on a Sunday. But the principle is the same – Gideon’s 300 are those who can overthrow the hosts of Midian!

## THE CHARACTER OF THE INTERCESSOR

I personally find it a great challenge to consider the command of the Apostle Peter quoted as the subject of this article: *“what manner of persons ought you to be?”*.

It is clear that God’s first concern for us is our personal walk with Christ – the Holiness of our own lives. God hears those who obey Him, so **our** first concern as intercessors should be **His** concern: what

manner of persons should **we** be in all Holy conduct and godliness?

I rather like the Authorized Version of that verse: “in all Holy **conversation**”. One of the first places Holiness shows up is in what we say – our conversation. If we are much in the presence of the Lord, through reading His Word and in prayer, then what we say will be affected. Our speech will be clean and our witness will be clear – polite, but straightforward.

The word “**godliness**” represents the Greek word ‘eusebeia’, which means piety towards God. However, if you read this verse in Greek, it is in the plural, ‘godlinesses’, that is **acts** of respect, piety and worship towards God. So part of our Holy walk is to **do** what God wants us to do.

Now that is a big challenge, and we could easily go for a big guilt-trip as we think about our own failings. But let us consider what other positive hints Peter gives us in these verses.

1. *“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God” (2 Peter 3:12-13)* We should keep our eyes on God’s own ultimate goal the return of Christ and His kingdom – surely a great spur to reality in our daily Christian lives. Christ’s return will go even beyond the millennial kingdom and finish in the burning up of this old world and the establishment of the new. So all we have here in the way of material possessions has no future.
2. *“Be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless” (2 Peter 3:14)* ‘Peace’ is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) and will

lead to being without spot and blameless. If you try metaphorically to flagellate yourself to be spotless and blameless you will get nowhere. Peace comes first, and *“being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1)*. The fruit of the Spirit arises from salvation itself and true peace will elude us unless we rest wholly in Christ Himself for our salvation. If we have peace first spotlessness and blamelessness will follow. So we need to make much of our salvation.

3. *“Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Peter 3:17)*  
This is a simple piece of advice – don’t be carried away with false teaching – stick to the Bible and you’ll be okay.

4. *“Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18)* You can’t make yourself grow, but if you have a good diet and suitable exercise you **will grow**. So feed on the Word of God and exercise yourself in prayer, worship and adoration of Jesus and you will grow in the grace of God and will become more like Jesus. There are no short-cuts to Holiness – just the old ways that God gave us at the beginning – in one way it just means to love the Lord your God and to love your brother also. What a challenge!

The Christian who takes heed to God’s way of Holiness is the one whom God can and will use to intercede effectively.

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