

The UNION

Get Ready to Meet the King!

God Calls His Church to
Truth, Faith and Holiness

Joan H. Richardson

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CHAPTER 21

The Chosen Nation

⁹ For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

¹⁰ Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. (Isaiah 48:9-10)

God chose Abram in Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans. He called him out of Ur and directed his steps as he journeyed, heading northwest with his family. Abram, his father, sisters, and brother settled in a city called Haran [also the name of his brother who died in Ur]. Finally, God separated him from his family, calling him to an unknown place. He and his wife Sarai left everyone but a nephew and trekked to Canaan.

Years later, God changed His name and made Abraham the father of all who believe and obey Him. Like him, first we trust in God, next we obey; then our journey begins. As Abraham has done, each of us will apprehend his own destiny one step at a time.

The Everlasting Covenant

³⁵ Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, *and* the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts *is* his name:

³⁶ If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, *then* the seed of Israel shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

³⁷ Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 31:35-37)

While it is true that *the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein* (Ps. 24:1), the whole world belongs to God, and He gives it to whomever He chooses, but one area was especially close to His heart when He gave it to Abraham and his descendants forever. For His chosen people, our Lord selected a particular origin as His own. The

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land of God, promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, stretches *from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.* (See Gen. 15:18)

His promises are good and trustworthy; therefore, the whole land is theirs to take though they have only realized a small part of its vastness. Many of their ancestors had lacked the courage and faith to slay the giants they'd seen across the Jordan. They never made it to the other side but were destroyed in the desert for their unbelief. The next generation gained the ground by crossing the river and winning victories in their wars, believing the promises and receiving them.

In 1947, Jews began returning to their land en masse after nearly two thousand years of disbursement. More than three millennia earlier, Israel had faced the challenge that remains: there were giants in the land. But His promises are theirs to gain as they believe His words, and He has cornered them to believe His every word as it is written.

God warns the world with history: every time the chosen nation spurned Him by unbelief, the LORD displayed His fierce anger against them. Israel is His to judge or bless. Perhaps “the time of Jacob’s trouble” has ended. (See Jer. 30:7) An earthquake will signal the return of their Messiah:

² For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

³ Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

⁴ And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south.

⁵ And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, *and* all the saints with thee. (Zechariah 14:2-5)

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The Pupil of His Eye

Does no one fear Him? The time of restoration will bless the chosen remnant; He will not restrain His fury against their enemies forever. Whoever boasts against the Jews will know the wrath of God within themselves, their families, their lands, and their cultures; the curse on them is evident to the whole world.

The Word exhorts us to embrace Israel and protect their nation. God promised their land and much more to Jacob—now who is on the Lord’s side? We who believe His words are like family to Israel, grafted in among them as spiritually chosen, having the faith Abraham had in the Sacrifice God provided. Are we believers who are justified by works and not by faith only, or is our faith dead? (See Jas. 2; then Rom. 6 and 8.)

For thus says the LORD of hosts, “After glory He has sent Me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye.
(Zechariah 2:8 NASB)

The expression, “the apple of his eye” is a frequently quoted idiom. In the Bible, it’s associated with Israel, reminding us that God is faithful to His beloved nation. Because Israel is dear to Him, God is her defense, true and faithful to His Word.

The word for “apple” can also be translated, “pupil.” The Hebrew word for pupil was a metaphor: the eye’s pupil allows light to enter, receiving it through the optic nerve to the brain where we “see” the image. Without the pupil, there is no vision, just blindness. The LORD calls Israel the pupil of His eye since His light entered His body on earth through His chosen ones. Since God appointed Israel to give light to our souls, we have been able to learn the secrets of His spiritual words.

Jacob believed God, refusing to release the man he wrestled until winning the match. The LORD named him Israel because he dared to persevere, overcoming through the pain to gain the blessing. At the time, Jacob had fathered eleven sons who’d beget the descendants of the nation. Before his death, he would bestow blessings on sons and grandsons as the patriarch leaned on his staff, still crippled by the wound the man of God had inflicted. (See Gen. 32:22-33:5)

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Centuries later, the light of moral justice arrived when God called Moses to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt, giving them His commandments in the wilderness. His light entered the world by the chosen deliverer when God spoke to him as a man speaks to his friend face-to-face. (from Ex. 33:11)

More than fourteen hundred years later, Israel offered the light of righteousness to the nations of the world when a young Jewish virgin brought forth the Son of God. The cross and empty tomb displayed His love for mankind, fulfilling the prophecies.

God selected the nation Israel as the pupil of His eye even before the hands of Jewish scribes wrote the Scriptures that are preserved to this day. Drawn from the Law and the Prophets, the writings of Jewish apostles enlightened the nations. Now the true light is the Word, *Immanuel*, Israel's Savior-Messiah.

These events came as the result of the faith of an old married couple who believed God, receiving words of truth from the God of impossible things. After the miraculous birth of their only son, their faith in the invisible One enlightened future generations.

We learn the truth about God through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, David, Josiah, Joel, Amos, Zechariah, Malachi, Jonah, the apostles—Paul, Mark, Matthew, James, John, Peter and many others—all Israelites, all Jews. Those who join them from the nations believe in the God of Israel, made Jews by faith in the same God. [The apostle Paul tells us that we who have left our uncleanness behind us are no longer gentiles but Jews, living by faith in the promised Son of God. Ruth, the Moabite wife of Boaz, became a Jew by faith in the Hebrew Scriptures just as we've been grafted in today.]

Soon YHWH will divide the Mount of Olives as He comes to judge the nations that oppose Israel. He will shake the earth, and exalt His throne in Jerusalem. Israel is the unique nation, signifying to the world that the God of the Jews alone is God over all: He is identified as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom He renamed Israel. And the God of Israel has a Son! [Is. 9:6]

Faith in His Son is critical to salvation. *Immanuel* means, "God with us." Since YHWH alone saves, and *Yeshua* means "YHWH saves," it's proper to say, "YHWH is with us" in *Yeshua*

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for YHWH is in His Son *Yeshua*, and His Son is like His eternal Father. When Jesus' name is used as a curse or spoken lightly, men blaspheme the holy name, YHWH, whose name is in His:

Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

Israel the Olive Tree

The Christian church doesn't accurately represent the Word that calls the congregation of believers indivisibly one new man—Jews and gentiles—the united, functioning body of Jesus Christ. In the early years, when gentiles first became believers, things were different than now: they joined their Jewish brothers and mentors in small fellowships to worship on fields, in homes, or in synagogues; they even gathered in caves for safety.

Confusion about Jewish laws caused problems at first, but the apostles resolved those issues by teaching the congregations the new covenant provisions: gentiles had become sons of Abraham through faith in *Yeshua*. The grace of the atonement had arrived, and the Holy Spirit had been poured out to draw all believers into the union of God. Holiness through sanctification, spiritual separation by the Holy Spirit, would be the sign of their Jewish heritage, rather than ordinances and rules that couldn't make them holy but had only separated them from the nations.

While those who left gentile beginnings are not Abraham's natural children, God loves all believers the same because we are all His in the union of His family by our kindred faith. (*"the flesh profits nothing"*— *Yeshua*) We have the same spiritual promises and blessings as the natural children of faith; however, his spiritual sons, not born of the same flesh but of the same Spirit, don't share the physical land that God promised Abram's natural descendants, but the eternal city that Abraham foresaw also belongs to us.

The temporal precedes the eternal. By the physical token of circumcision, the physical descendants were given the physical land of Israel, which prefigures the eternal kingdom. It is the token of the promise to come. Abraham's spiritual descendants, whether Jews or gentiles, will inhabit the everlasting kingdom

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and fill its city, the New Jerusalem.

Abraham and the prophets after him foresaw the eternal city, built with spiritual gems, closely fitted together. Before he could accept his place in the Spirit, he walked the physical land in obedience to God. He learned that first the corruptible benefits come; later on, incorruptible, everlasting benefits are established. (Re: 1 Cor. 15:39-57) He saw the dust before he saw the heavens.

Today Abraham longs for his natural children to recognize the promised Son, miraculously begotten by God. When Jews receive His Son, Abraham shares their joy. By choosing life in the Savior, they are returning to their God. The Father of all who believe will rush to greet them with His arms wide open. In that great welcome is the glorious beauty and joy of our salvation.

Like Jacob, Israel has struggled to survive, often groaning in pain from his brokenness, yet still he hopes in God against all odds. He is reminded of his past chastisements but sees the promised land and is caught between the two until he receives the unseen by faith. In his weakness, God is always his strength.

Now YHWH stands with Israel to heal him with compassion. He who called Israel out of Jacob turned the heart of Jacob back to Israel, returning him to the land from the nations.

Finally, Judah's Scepter will come and our Savior will heal their memories of Babylon forever. Therefore we pray for the peace of Jerusalem until the Messiah supernaturally comes to destroy their enemies, establish His government, and reign over the earth from Jerusalem!

¹⁷ For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

¹⁸ Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.

¹⁹ And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them,

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and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.

²⁰ Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. (Jeremiah 30:17-20)

Their time of testing in the desert proved the Hebrews were slaves to their flesh, but God spared a remnant. He cultivated that wild olive tree, clipping back its branches to shape them in conformity to His will as the fear of God restrained their sins. The prophets boldly announced the judgments of God; but they rebelled again. Then He was wrathful, destroying many; yet for the sake of His promises, He saved a remnant to regain the land. By them, He reminds us He is Sovereign; no one prevents the fulfillment of His words, and He will command honor.

³⁷ Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:

³⁸ And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

³⁹ And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:

⁴⁰ And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

⁴¹ Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. (Jeremiah 32:37-41)

Today God is again electing Jews for salvation as the time of the gentiles closes. The nations have believed in great numbers, but their sun will set as its light rises on Israel. Now the sons of Jacob are finding it increasingly difficult to resist His Son.

²⁷ For this is my covenant unto them,
When I shall take away their sins.”

²⁸ Concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election, *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and calling of God

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are irrevocable. ³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹ even so have these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God hath committed them all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all.

(Romans 11:27-32 NKJV) The point is, God is Sovereign.

Israel is our object lesson: we must not draw back. God has no pleasure in us who cower from gaining His promises. He called and equipped us to win His holiness by faith in Him, and we must overcome the giants that challenge us. Losing is not an option; we must defeat everything that rises against the Word of God. Jesus Christ is our only hope: those who cower in unbelief are destroyed.

So What's Kosher?

One day, Yeshua approached a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. In moments, He removed the wall of separation that had divided people for centuries when He took a cup of water from her hand. The Prince of Peace was introducing a new covenant, eliminating gender, racial, cultural, and class divisions. After His resurrection, He sent Peter into a gentile home to share the good news of salvation; soon others delivered the message.

By faith, Peter had unlocked the kingdom gates to the gentile world, marking a turning point in the ethnic and cultural heritage of believing congregations. Later, Paul disclosed the mystery, kept secret for ages: Jews would win the gentiles to salvation by preaching the gospel. In response, gentiles would win the Jews by provoking them to envy through a personal relationship with the Spirit, the presence of Christ in us—our shining glory.

Soon the spirit of grace and supplication will be showered from heaven for the land to be healed and the people, forgiven. No longer do genealogies affect our relationship with God since the two, Jews and gentiles, are one union in the Spirit of our Lord; yet the promises are for the descendants of Jacob.

The LORD had not commanded Abraham to abstain from any food. Coming from Ur, he had no idea food could be *unclean* to eat; God reckoned his faith to him as righteousness before dietary laws. Abraham's diet had been common to the descend-

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ants of Noah: *And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, ... Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. (Gen. 9:1a, 3)*

When Israel's sons sinned in the wilderness, God destroyed all but their children. He would have made descendants through Moses, but the prophet implored Him on behalf of those He'd rescued from Egypt. Moses prayed that God would preserve His people or the nations would deride Him as untrue. So He granted Moses' request, sparing His own while adding regulations and ordinances to the moral commands in order to separate them from the sins of the gentile world.

The dietary restrictions and regulations were written by Moses in the desert after the laws were given on two tablets of stone. The Mosaic covenant prepared them for an everlasting covenant with better promises that would supersede ceremonies and rules (kept by the flesh), for the heart of the moral law is love. The new covenant would be personal, and it would be kept by faith in the power of God, not by the works of the law.

Paul wrote to the Jews in Galatians 4:22-31, explaining the two covenants as two women; Hagar [the covenant of Mt. Sinai], and Sarah [the covenant of the promise]. Paul concludes, *Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."* So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. (Gal. 4:30-31 NKJV)

²³ Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:23-29 NIV)

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The old has gone; the new has come by the greater Prophet, first foreseen by Job; then by Abraham and Isaac, by Jacob who bestowed the scepter to Judah; Moses foretold His arrival; Isaiah expounded on His sacrifice; David foreknew His death. Jeremiah and others declared a new covenant, but Israel rejected their words when God sent His Son in the flesh of His own people. Their leaders called for His death, and Rome crucified Him, but He rose and ascended to His Father.

³¹ And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

³² And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. (Mark 8:31-32)

The promised land would belong to the remnant of their flesh. Their enemies are His enemies, deceived to destroy them, but the true God is trustworthy and faithful to defend His own.

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

(John 14:23)

We who belong to Yeshua don't have laws that separate us from others, but we've entered the faith that Abraham had before the regulations came. The righteousness of God sanctifies us as we yield to His Spirit, and we are all Jews only as we live by our faith in the Jewish Savior. By our active, living faith, we are Abraham's children; therefore, we will gain the eternal promises as joint heirs with his seed, Yeshua, for we are one in the truth of His words.

We are free to eat what's set before us or to abstain: *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Rom. 14:17)* The Jew is free to be as a Jew in the presence of Jews, or as a gentile in the presence of gentles. He is free to be thoughtful of others. The Jew who trusts in Yeshua is not under ordinances or rules, required of him before he was set free, but he is free by knowing his liberty was purchased by the blood of the Lamb of God.

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²⁹ Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

(Romans 3:29-30 NIV)

Athletes exercise by adding weights of resistance. After working out, they're ready to compete; then they remove the weights, setting aside every encumbrance. The ordinances and rules are heavy weights: when the Jew believes, the weights are lifted, and he can excel in righteousness. He has learned discipline; now he is free to cast off the weights and finish the race.

⁴⁷ The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

⁴⁸ As *is* the earthy, so *are* they also that *are* earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

(1 Corinthians 15:47-49)

The Eternal One

Which is greater, the original or its copy? The temple and its altar existed in heaven before the Jewish nation was formed on earth. Centuries after their formation, God commanded them to make copies of the heavenly things and establish visuals of the invisible things, using physical elements from the earth; but the temple in heaven was not Jewish—heaven came first.

When the Word of God was made flesh by David's seed, He was named Yeshua to become the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Now the twelve tribes of Israel are memorialized as twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, and its twelve foundations are named as the Jewish apostles. In the eternal city, we are one body by faith in the truth, one new Mankind, living in harmony as the whole body was created to do. And the Lion of Judah is our King.

The invisible promises were fulfilled in the visible world, but earthly realities are temporal tokens of their eternal counterparts. Melchizedek had been King of Salem long before Abram was born, and the Word of God—the Seed—was in His bosom from eternity before it was made flesh. The visible land of Israel and its capital city, Jerusalem, are precedents of unseen

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promises to Abram who believed God and left Haran for Canaan hundreds of years before their realization.

From an earthly perspective, the land signifies the invisible reality, like a promise or guarantee of things to come. Its capital city's counterpart is the eternal city in heaven, not built by human hands. The fulfilled promises are visible to us now, and their visible realities guarantee the arrival of invisible, everlasting things to come. The Spirit guarantees the transformation of the visible body into bodies like Jesus' own glorious flesh, and the Bible guarantees the passing away of the old, and a new creation from the visible heavens and earth. By faith we enter the kingdom because *we walk by faith, not by sight.* (2 Cor. 3:7)

Abraham was not a Jew but a Semite, the grandfather of Jacob who blessed twelve sons by faith. He blessed his son Judah with an inheritance, the right to reign—the scepter. One day the Son of David, the Lion of Judah, will sit in Jerusalem as King of kings. At the end, it is transformed as New Jerusalem when He hands over His kingdom to His Father YHWH forever. (See Jn. 10:29-30; 1 Cor. 15:24-25)

We who live by faith share His victories today, and we will reign in Him forever because His Spirit reigns over us. Strangers to this world, we seek the union of the true congregation, the restoration of the Israel of God. Transformed by the vicarious death and resurrection of His body, we were *sown in corruption*, but will be *raised in incorruption.* (1 Cor. 15:42b)

It is impossible for God to break His covenant with Abram whose seed would bless all nations, and it is impossible for Him to break His promise, giving the land of the Philistines to Abram and his progeny because Abraham obeyed God's command:

¹⁵ Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶ and said, "By Myself I have sworn," this is the LORD's declaration: "Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, ¹⁷ I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the gates of their enemies. ¹⁸ And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed My command. (Genesis 22:15-18 HCSB)