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Abraham's Faith, Key to the Future

This issue of **Pressing On!** is all about the great and incomparable plans that God has for his nation, "Israel". Abraham's descendants are still with us. The many, many promises and prophecies in the Old Testament, in spite of Israel's unfaithfulness and rebellion - to the extent even of crucifying their own Messiah - give the unanimous assurance of a glorious future for that nation. Where? In the land promised to Abraham and his children. **But**, inevitably, Abraham's faith is key to the fulfilment of those promises and prophecies.

In Romans 4 and Galatians 3, Paul is at pains to show that **no one** can be made righteous, or be saved, without the faith of Abraham. Only "**those who are of the faith of Abraham are sons of Abraham**". He is commenting on the state of the Gentiles, the *other* nations. They are not biological descendants of Abraham, they are not circumcised, they don't know the law that came through Moses, and they haven't kept it. So what hope could there be for them? **None whatsoever**, unless they too simply believe, with the very same faith that Abraham had!

If Abraham's faith is key to the Gentile's future, how much more to that of his biological children! In fact, the Word makes it clear that a circumcised, law-abiding Jew, who refuses to embrace his Messiah by faith, is, in reality - i.e. in the sight of God - no more a son of Abraham than an unbelieving Gentile.

The many Jews who continue to harden their hearts exclude themselves from the promises made to Abraham and the other patriarchs. What a sad meeting that was when Paul, in Roman captivity, had to speak clearly to the Jews who had come to see him. Their hearts, ears and eyes had stopped to function properly (Acts 28). They did not perceive the clear sense of their own Scriptures.

Although the nation of Israel has continued just like that, the prophecies do say that the Lord has a "remnant" among them. Some prominent examples are: Isaiah 10:20-23; Micah 5:7-9; Zeph. 3:10-20; Mal. 3:16-18.

Meanwhile, **all** who have believed with the faith of Abraham, are incorporated into the "EKKLESIA". One of these days, God's EKKLESIA, once it is complete, will be snatched away all of a sudden (1 Cor. 15 and 1 Thess. 4). And so, **all** believers (of the faith of Abraham), whether Gentiles *or* Jews, vanish in one instant, in the "twinkling of an eye", meeting their Lord in the air - as the apostle says - later to return with him, when he is crowned **King** of kings.

With the event of the "rapture", the Antichrist, a "beast" of a man, finally has his chance to take control through the New World Order. He allows Israel to rebuild its temple. This is on the basis of a 7 year treaty which he concludes "with many" (Dan. 9:27). But after only 3½ years, he himself occupies the throne reserved for the Messiah and demands worship.

Zechariah 13 has this amazing prophecy about the future remnant of Israel; i.e. about those Jews who, at that point, in the remaining 3½ years, in their extreme anguish, at long last embrace their true Messiah:

"One third shall be left in [the land]: I will bring the one third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is my people!'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God!'"

Then the nation of Israel, that remnant of one third, will be told: *"Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and his glory will be seen upon you!"* (Is. 60).

That is when **"in Abraham all the nations will be blessed!"** (Gal. 3:8-9).



The Promises that are Everlasting

Source: www.ebenezer-ef.org

Author: Richard F Gottier

The 39 books of the Old Testament, though written over many centuries, follow an amazingly coherent theme: God's covenant call upon one man and his descendants. The offspring of Adam soon degenerated to a godless generation, whose every thought was only evil continually. The generations born to Noah proved to be yet more defiant to God.

At this point, God reached down into Mesopotamia and chose a man from whose seed He would develop a holy people. Their task was to be a 'light to the nations' (Is. 42:6), evidence that God is righteous and good, worthy of our praise and worship.

God's words to Abraham were straightforward: if he would walk blamelessly, obediently before him, He would bless him with the land where he dwelt, bless his offspring bountifully, and establish an eternal covenant with his seed (Gn. 17:1). The nature of God's covenant is emphasized repeatedly. "All the land which you see, I will give to you and to your descendants forever" (Gn. 13:15). Forever!

God had also promised to bless all who would bless Abraham and curse those who reviled him. And through Abraham's descendants all families on earth would be blessed (Gn. 12:2-3).

Moses summarized the essential points of this covenant with Abraham: "If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant (says the Lord), then you shall be my own possession among all the peoples ... and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5-6). God promised to this people, Israel, that He would bless them with the covenant land forever, and would ever be "an enemy to their enemies, an adversary to their adversaries" (Ex. 23:22). He further promised to set them high above the nations, with blessings and prosperity beyond their fondest hopes (Dt. 28:1-14). **So one may ask**, do these covenants remain unfulfilled? Perhaps more accurately, are they just now in the process of being fulfilled - if we could grasp the entirety of his Word?

Our God will move heaven and earth to fulfill every covenant promise, and just here is the scriptural foundation for understanding the unfolding of prophecy today. He is moving heaven and earth. Every promise of his Word will stand true for ever. The restoration of Israel is basis enough for the understanding of our day. His people, his Covenant, his Land will prove to be the vehicle for the consummation of the age, and the return of our Lord!

The Obedience that is Required

The covenant promise made between God and Abraham was highly dependent upon Israel's diligent obedience to God's commands (Dt. 28:1), and by every means possible He warned them of the dire consequences of all disobedience. His holiness will brook no compromise: his purity requires a holy walk before him.

Whole sections of the Torah (five books of Moses) are dedicated to the explicit nature of their responsibilities to the Lord. In fact, the third book of the Torah, Leviticus, devotes an entire chapter (26) to increasing judgments upon his people if they steadfastly refused to repent and return to their Lord. Sudden terror, consumption, fevers, being ruled over by their enemies, plagues and wild beasts - for 20 verses God warns and admonishes. Finally, there comes the culminating, the most unthinkable of judgments in Leviticus 26:32-33, "You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste".

But almost at once Israel sinned and strayed far from his commands. The Lord patiently warned them by loosing their neighboring pagan nations to attack his people. He sent prophets to every generation, finally warning of a coming exile. The ten northern tribes having rebelled earlier and more severely, fell to Assyria. The writer of 2 Kings records a litany of their

grievous sins capped by: "they served their own gods according to the custom of the nations..." (2 K. 17:33).

A century later similar prophetic warnings were given to Judah and Jerusalem, yet they too refused to heed them. Finally Nebuchadnezzar began a process of staged deportation, with Jerusalem falling in 587 BC. Our Heavenly Father, ever faithful to his promises through Jeremiah, raised up the Medo-Persians to defeat Babylon and set Judah free. While only a remnant actually returned to the land, these determined to cling fiercely to this object of his covenant. Poring over the ancient commandments and God's requirements for keeping the land, this remnant leadership developed a zealous legalism, resolving never again to be driven from it.

This legalism - carefully following the details of the law - was at first to their credit, yet ultimately their undoing. Believing that they could win God's approval through their own good works, they were blinded to their Messiah's true mission. Missing the Heavenly Father's gift of his Son, to atone for man's sins, they concluded that their 'real' Messiah, whenever he should appear, must be on a mission from heaven to restore Israel's earthly kingdom to a place of prominence among the nations. Jesus didn't fit into such a picture, so they rejected his claims and his messianic mission.

The Exile that was Inevitable

The Lord gave Israel 40 years, following the death and resurrection of Jesús, to accept his most generous of all gifts. When the Jewish leadership became increasingly recalcitrant He released them into the hands of Rome. In 70 AD Jerusalem fell and the Jewish people were scattered. Under the zealot, Bar Kochba, the Jews rebelled again, only to be crushed and utterly dispersed in 135 AD. God had again judged the Jewish people because they would not abandon their works and receive their Messiah by faith. Through their rejection, the apostle Paul teaches us that we in the nations would come into the Kingdom of God ahead of Israel.

The Diaspora! So once again God's most solemn of prophecies was fulfilled: "I will scatter you among the nations, and will draw out a sword after you" (Lev. 26:33). The worst of all judgments is to be cut off from the Land and isolated from God's presence - to be torn from the covering of his presence and the joyous worship at Jerusalem on the great feast days and torn from the tender hope that the land of God's covenant promise is beneath their feet, and they no longer walk in sweet fellowship with their Lord.

Down the centuries the Sons of Abraham have been dispersed and today there are at least a few communities in nearly every country. Wherever they have gone anti-Semitism has dogged their steps. Pogroms and massacres have decimated their numbers. They have endured inquisitions and been driven from many countries. From the Gulag of Russia to the Holocaust of Germany, they have been terrorised and persecuted. Today anti-Semitism is again markedly on the rise in every major country of the world.

Moses prophesied this despair of heart: "And among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. So your life shall hang

in doubt before you; and you shall be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life. In the morning you shall say, 'Would that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Would that it were morning!', because of the dread of your heart which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes which you shall see" (Dt. 28:65-67).

From the first exile comes that most poignant of Scriptures: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps. For there our captors demanded of us songs, and our tormentors mirth, saying sing us one of the songs of Zion. How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her skill. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Ps. 137:1-6).

"How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" For 1,900 years this cry has echoed in the hearts of the Sons of Abraham 'scattered among the nations'. Estimates of world Jewry today vary, based upon the definitions of 'Jewishness' by researchers, but by any estimate the great preponderance are still outside the Land. Some six million Jews live in modern Israel and approximately 15 million around the world.

The Jewish Diaspora is one of our Lord's profoundest miracles. Any average population strewn lightly among a multitude of nations should have been assimilated within two generations, three at most. Yet some 60 generations later Jewish communities are readily identifiable in so many nations. Our merciful Lord is holding out the possibility of repentance, forgiveness and return - if they would humble themselves. And just here is the hope for Israel today. The present-day restoration of Israel is supreme evidence of his unfolding mercies.

The Restoration that is Assured


Can it be that He who scattered Israel to the ends of the earth would also tenderly gather her home to a restored land? We in the Christian Church have never been adept at grasping the full nature of our Heavenly Father and responding appropriately. Rather, we have made great, vacillating swings in theology between God's loving kindness and his wrath.

Cast against the backdrop of God's righteous judgment in scattering Israel widely among the nations are the treasured promises of his mercy - promises of restoration and forgiveness. These prophetic words are our hope, and a few selected passages will reveal his heart. "When you return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and soul..., then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back" (Dt. 30:2-4).

Jeremiah quotes the Father: "Then I myself shall gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture... 'Therefore behold, the days are coming', declares the Lord 'when they will no longer say: As the Lord lives who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt, but: As the Lord lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them'. Then they will live on their own soil" (23:3,7-8). And again in

Ezekiel is the promise: "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land" (36:24).

In all this, the central matter is the covenant, God's Word to Abraham and to Israel. It is about the honour of his holy name! Every word God spoke through his prophets will be honoured. Isaiah wondered aloud: "Can a nation be born in one day?" (Is. 66:8), yet that is precisely what God did in May of 1948! Paul would exclaim: "I say then, God has not rejected his people, has He? May it never be! For I, too, am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham.... God has not rejected his people whom He foreknew..." (Rom. 11:1-2).

The key question remains: How can this picture be relevant to us, his Church, today? It was Isaiah, peering down the centuries, who saw our Jesus, the Messiah, as "a tender shoot, a root out of parched ground" (53:2). Out of a people who rejected their divinely appointed place as a light to the nations, who even rejected the God who called them - out of this parched ground - God raised up the Blessed One, our Savior! And our roots go deep - our debt to the Jewish people is indeed beyond measure. As Christians, our hope in the prophetic promises for these last days, our expectation of our Lord's soon return, rests upon the integrity of God's Word and his name! God's faithfulness to his covenant promises to Abraham and Israel is the very foundation of our own eternal hope. The restoration of the land of Israel and her people today are testimony to his profound trustworthiness! He is truly watching over his Word to perform it (Jer. 1:12). 

Israel's Timeline

Jim van H.

Fifty dates (years or periods) of special note are listed below - the last two dates remaining open.

The chronology is based on the classical work of Scholar James Ussher of Armagh published in 1650:

"ANNALS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, DEDUCED FROM THE FIRST ORIGINS OF THE WORLD".

- 4004 BC** Adam, the first man, is created - he is perfect. Then his sin brings death - to him and to all of creation. Even so, the Creator speaks of the Redeemer, the "seed of the woman". He will crush the serpent's head. It is the first promise of the coming **Messiah**, who will be the "**Last Adam**" (Calvary, Death), but also the "**Second Man**" (Resurrection, New Life) (Gn. 1-3; Ro. 5:12-14; 1 Co. 15:22, 45-47; 1 Ti. 2:13-14; Jud.14).
- 2349** During the universal Flood, only Noah & family are saved on board the ark (Gn. 7-8; Mt. 24:37-39; Hb. 11:7; 2 P. 2:5). Shem, Noah's second son, is mentioned in Luke 3 as the ancestor of Abraham, David and **Messiah** himself.
- 1995** Abram is born in Ur of the Chaldees, Mesopotamia (Gn. 11; Jos. 24:2).
- 1920** God promises Abram a land, a great nation, a great name, and great blessing: "**In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed!**" Then Abram arrives in Canaan (Gn. 12; Jos. 24:3).
- 1913** Abram encounters Melchizedek, king of "Salem" - first mention of **Jerusalem**, oldest (living) city on earth (Gn. 14:18-20).
- 1896** God's covenant (of circumcision) with Abram is promised to be "everlasting". His name is changed to Abraham (Gn. 17).
- 1895** Isaac, the child of promise, is born to Sarah (Gn. 21).
- 1880** Abraham, by faith, does not withhold his beloved son from God on Mount Moriah. He prophesies: "**God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering**", and: "**In the mount of the LORD it shall be provided!**" (Gn. 22; Jn. 8:56).
- 1739** Jacob, Abraham's grandson, becomes Israel (Gn. 32).
- 1729** Joseph, Jacob's son, is sold by his brothers and taken to Egypt (Gn. 37).
- 1706** Jacob and the patriarchs, the "Children of Israel", move to Egypt (Gn. 46).
- 1689** Jacob prophesies that **Messiah** will come through the tribe of Judah (Gn. 49:10).
- 1571** Moses (younger brother to Miriam and Aaron) is born in Egypt (Ex. 2). He is destined to be Israel's deliverer and guide (Hb. 11:23-29).
- 1491** The Exodus from Egypt starts after all of Egypt's first-born have suddenly died - from the palace to the dungeon. The Israelites, having applied the blood of a lamb to their doorposts and lintel, are saved from the judgment. This is the Passover lamb - its life was sacrificed to save them. Once they have crossed the Sea of Reeds, their wanderings in the wilderness begin. They will turn out to last 40 years (Ex. 12-15; Jos. 24:6-10)*.
- At Sinai the Law is given through Moses (Ex. 20; Jn. 1:17). Then the Tabernacle is constructed, according to the pattern shown to Moses in the mountain (Ex. 25:9, 40; 26:30; Nu. 8:4; Ps. 106:9-33; Acts 7:44-45; Hb. 8:5).
- 1451** Moses prophesies of the promised **Messiah**: "a Prophet like me" (Dt. 18:15-19; Acts 3:22-23). Start of Canaan's conquest under Joshua (Jos. 6; 24:11-13).
- 1048** David becomes king over all Israel, while **Jerusalem** is made the capital city (2 Sam. 5). Remarkable prophecies are given to David about the crucified and crowned **Messiah**, who will be seated on David's throne (e.g. in Ps. 22 & 132:13-18).
- 1011/04** **Jerusalem's** first temple is built by Solomon (1 K. 6).
- 975** Ten tribes, led by Jeroboam, split from Judah, Benjamin and the House of David, forming a separate (and idolatrous) kingdom. In 930 Samaria becomes their capital (1 K. 12 & 16). In 740 they are carried off into captivity by Assyria (2 K. 17).
- 607** First deportation from **Jerusalem** to Babylon, which includes Daniel and many others of royal blood (2 K. 24; Is. 39:7; Dan. 1).
- 587** **Jerusalem** and its temple are destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The last deportation takes place (Lev. 26; 2 K. 25; Ps. 137). Just before the deportation, Judah's people are beginning to be called by the name of 'Jews' - first mention in Jeremiah 32:12. Then this 'new name' takes off, with the book of Esther mentioning it a record 52 times.
- 536** End of exile under Persia's Cyrus. Partial return - led by Zerubbabel & Jeshua (Ezra 1-2).
- 515** **Jerusalem's** second temple is built by Zerubbabel (Ezra 6; Haggai; Zech. 1:16-17; 4:9-10; Mt. 1:12-13). Meanwhile in Persia, the Jews' archenemy, Haman, is plotting to have all the Jews of the empire wiped out. Through God's providence, with Esther as queen and Mordecai as her counselor, the tables are turned and Haman is hanged. This gives rise to the annual celebration of the Feast of Purim (Esther).
- 445** **Jerusalem's** walls and gates are restored under Nehemiah (Neh. 1-12).
- 397** Malachi's ministry. Close of Old Testament (Mal. 1-4).
- 140** During the inter-testament period, the Hasmonean dynasty is established after the initial Maccabean revolt in 164, which threw off the Hellenistic yoke. Theocratic monarchy under the Hasmoneans lasts till 37 BC, when Herod manages to overthrow them and becomes king himself by the grace of Rome.

* Exodus 12:40 states: "**Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt and Canaan was 430 years**", i.e. acc. to the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. Since they indicate (as shown) that Canaan's sojourn should be included with Egypt's, we may take this to be the key to account for the lengthy period. Israel's sojourn then should be counted from the time Abraham arrived in Canaan, not from the time Jacob arrived in Egypt.

4 BC Start of New Testament period.

Four centuries have come and gone without any prophet. Now John the Baptist is born. He is "more than a prophet" (Is. 40:3; Lk. 1:13-17; 76-79; Mt. 11:9; Jn. 1:29-33), and the forerunner of Israel's **Messiah** - who himself is born as Immanuel, Son of God/Son of Man, in Bethlehem, the city of David (Is. 7:14; 9:1-7; Mic. 5:2; Mt. 1).

33 AD The Jews hand over their **Messiah** to be crucified. Then, risen from the dead on the third day, **Messiah** appears to many during a forty day period (Ps. 22; Is. 53; Dn. 9:26^A; Mt. 27-28; Jn. 20-21; Acts 13:16-41). On the day of Pentecost, the promised "Comforter", God's Holy Spirit, is given to 120 of **Messiah's** disciples. That, and their bold stand for the crucified and risen **Messiah**, causes a massive impact in **Jerusalem** - a ripple effect touching many Jewish communities throughout the Roman Empire (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2). It is the starting point for the general preaching of **Messiah's** Gospel, which "is **the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, to the Jew first...**" (Acts 1:8; Ro. 1:16).

In God's dealings with Israel as a nation, a parenthesis is opened. The nation that has crucified its **Messiah** is temporarily put aside, and a new 'spiritual nation' is called into being. This is "God's Ekklesia" (i.e., "God's called-out ones"), drawn from Jews and Gentiles (Mt. 16:16-18; Acts 20:28; Ef. 2:11-22; 1 P. 2:4-19).

35 The worst persecutor of **Messiah's** followers, the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus, is stopped in his tracks by **Messiah** himself on the road to Damascus. Saul comes to his senses, surrenders and learns how to pray and preach. Later called 'Paul', he is instrumental in getting the Gospel out and getting the new followers of **Messiah** to gather as local ekklesias in what today would have been some ten different countries (Acts 9; 26:4-18; Gal. 1; Fil. 3:3-9; 2 Ti. 4:6-8).

70 Jerusalem and Herod's temple are destroyed by Titus, the Roman "prince to come" (Dn. 9:26^B; Mt. 24:1-2; Lk. 19:41-44). The universal Jewish Diaspora follows (Dt. 28:36-37; 64-67).

96 The final "Revelation of **Messiah**" is given to the apostle John - exiled on Patmos (Rv. 1-22). Close of the New Testament.

638 Jerusalem under Muslim rule.

1290 Expulsion of the Jews from England.

1348-51 Europe's Jews, accused of causing the 'Black Death', are massacred in countless cities and towns.

1394 Final expulsion of the Jews from France.

1492 Expulsion of the Jews from Spain.

1543 Luther publishes his severest anti-Jewish treatise.

1800 Mass pogroms in czarist Russia. Large scale emigration of Russian Jews to USA starts. After 1882 many thousands, instead, go to Palestine, exchanging the Diaspora for the promised land (Jer. 23:3-8; Ez. 36:24).

1872 The term "anti-Semitism" is coined.

1897 First Zionist Congress, Basel, Switzerland - convened and chaired by Theodor Herzl.

1917 The Balfour Declaration, on behalf of the British government, supports a national Jewish home in Palestine.

1928-53 In the Soviet Union the 'Gulag' persecution of Jews only eases when Stalin dies.

1933-45 The Nazi "holocaust" - the genocide of mainly Jews - claims six million lives.

1946 Many thousands of surviving Jews begin to make their way to Palestine from the ruins of Europe (Ps. 126:1-4).

1948 State of Israel is officially established. War of Independence. Mass immigration of Jews from surrounding (mostly Arab) nations gets underway.

1967 Six Day War. **Jerusalem** united and, after 1900 years, back under Jewish rule. Restored as Israel's capital city, it is from now on destined to increasingly be the "burdensome stone for all people", the most frustrating item on the political agendas of the world, and ultimately leading to Armageddon (Zech. 12:1-9).


1973 Yom Kippur War.

1986-91 30,000 Ethiopian Jews immigrate.

1991 Mass emigration to Israel from former Soviet Union takes off.

..... The pseudo messiah (the last "prince to come"), has been waiting in the wings. When, all of a sudden, God's spiritual nation, his 'Ekklesia', is "caught away to meet the Lord in the air" (Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Thes. 4:15-18), the "son of perdition", the "lawless one", rears his head and makes a covenant with the Jews, i.e. with "many" Jews (Dn. 9:27; Jn. 5:43; 2 Thes. 2:3-12). Thus the green light is given for the building of the new temple, which gets Israel ensnared in "Jacob's Trouble" (Jer. 30:1-15; Mt. 24:15-22). For that time of great tribulation, **Messiah** - the 'Lamb' - has 144,000 sealed servants, carefully chosen from Israel's tribes, ready to serve him (Rv. 7 & 14). Even so, two thirds of Israel's millions perish (Zech. 13:8-9; Mt. 23:13, 15, 27-38; Jn. 8:39-47; Acts 3:23; 7:51-53).

..... The 'period of parenthesis', opened after Israel rejected its **Messiah**, now closes. God is once again dealing directly and dynamically with the Children of Israel. The surviving one third (the remnant) is saved by **Messiah's** intervention. "**They will look on Me whom they pierced.**" There is radical repentance, total cleansing and national regeneration (Lev. 26:40-45; Ez. 36:22-38; 37:21-28; 39:21-29; Dan. 12:1; Zech. 12:10-14; 14:4-9; Mt. 24:29-30; Acts 1:6-7; Ro. 11:25-27).

Messiah returns in unsurpassed glory. All of his saints accompany him and share that glory (Ps. 24; Zech. 14:5^c; Col. 3:4; 2 Thes. 1:10; Jude 14-15; Rv. 19:11-16; 20:1-4). As King of kings, **Messiah** takes his seat on David's throne in **Jerusalem**. His angels gather together the elect nation of Israel: "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Dt. 30:1-6; 66:11-12; Is. 10:20-22; 11:11-12; 27:13; 30:19; 33:20-22; 35:1-10; 40:1-17; 43:5-7; 52:8-10; 65:18-25; 66:10-16, 20; Jer. 23:3-8; Ez. 36:24; Zeph. 3:12-20; Zech. 8:7-8, 20-23; Mt. 24:31). Then it is the turn of "the nations" - they are summoned and judged by **Messiah** (Ps. 2; Is. 2:2-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-5; 24:23; Joel 3:1-17; Zeph. 3:8; Mt. 25:31-46; 2 Thes. 1:7-10) 

At last: God's Name hallowed; his Kingdom come; his Will done - where? On earth as in heaven!

Escaped from the Sword

The Story of Rose Warmer

It was the 1930s - atrocities against Jews were becoming commonplace in Austria and Czechoslovakia; Jews were being forced to work as cleaners and garbage collectors in the streets. In Hungary, reports reached the family of Rose Warmer that the oldest son had been deported to a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. They barely understood what a concentration camp was, but the rumors were terrible. Rose's aging father could no longer endure the increasing pressure and died suddenly of a heart attack. But surely they were far enough out of Hitler's reach? The death of Rose's father shocked and grieved her immensely. With her young husband urging her on, she turned to spiritualism in a search for reassurance about the afterlife. But instead of finding peace, her mind became tormented by evil spirits; once, these spirits even attacked her physically and tried to tear her body apart. Now, instead of finding relief from the grief of losing her father, Rose had a far worse problem - the demonic spirits would not leave her!

As if these desperate problems were not bad enough, Rose's heart bore an even deeper burden; the unfaithfulness of her young husband. Her troubled soul groped in the darkness for light and life. Where could it be found? If only she could become a new Rose altogether!

Still mourning for her father, Rose began with desperation to turn the pages of her Jewish Bible, anxious to find some hope and comfort. Over and over again she devoured the book of Job, then the Psalms... but to her frustration, she could not make head or tail of it. She longed to meet someone who could talk to her about the meaning of the Bible. She learned about weekly meetings, where the Bible was explained clearly. Rose could hardly wait for the next meeting. The day finally came and she took her place in the front row. Rose was instantly gripped when the American missionary started to speak about the Jewish Messiah! He explained prophecy after prophecy from the Scriptures, each of them fulfilled in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Little time was wasted at the close of the meeting before Rose was intently questioning Mr. Miller, the speaker. She gladly accepted his offer to meet him and his wife regularly to discuss the Bible.

She began earnestly flicking the pages of her Bible at home after the first session, to find things for herself and to see if she had been told the truth. The next day she sought out Mr. and Mrs. Miller again, full of questions after searching the scriptures in her Bible. Later, as she recalls, while reading the Gospel of John, 'With everything in me, I gave my heart to the Messiah, to the Savior, to the Lord Jesus Christ. And not only my heart, I also gave my *life* to Him. I was born again!!'

With exuberant joy, Rose began telling her Jewish brethren about the Messiah of Israel. Until she met the Millers, no one had told her that she could be saved from her sin and from Hell. So now she was spreading the Good News to crowds of hungry souls. The people couldn't have been more desperate and needy. The Hungarians were horrified when their long-standing ally, Austria, was annexed by Germany. Then, when Hungary's premier committed suicide, a Nazi was appointed in his place.

Working with Rose, the Millers evangelistic efforts became all the more fervent. Many came to faith through their final days of ministry in Budapest. Then, one day, Rose received the terrible news that the Millers had been imprisoned; like Rose, they were Jewish and their faith in Jesus did not exempt them from suffering with their nation. Rose rallied the believers to be in prayer for the Millers day and night. God answered prayer and after only a few days their release was secured by the American government. They were evacuated from the country.

Now without her spiritual parents, Rose continued the work of ministering to dear Jewish souls - especially to children and to young Jewish wives whose husbands had been taken off to the camps. Vast numbers of Jewish children had been abandoned to survive in the woods when their parents had been taken away to the camps. Others had simply got lost in the terrible upheavals of whole populations, migrating from country to country in faint hope of finding shelter from the Nazi storm. Rose visited hospitals, giving out the Word of God everywhere she went. She became like a mother to two little girls, whose father had been sent to the camps and whose mother was dying of tuberculosis in hospital. It wasn't long before both girls received the Lord Jesus as their Savior. The Lord further magnified his grace to the family when their mother recovered and also put her faith in the Lord Jesus! During the Bible studies Rose conducted, she often found desperate young wives from the Jewish community eagerly joining her.

For this trembling Jewish community in Hungary, darker days lay ahead. Hitler ordered the German takeover of Hungary. SS officer Adolph Eichmann lost no time in beginning the deportation of Hungarian Jews. His operation began on May 15th, 1944. By the beginning of July he had sent over 437,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau, 90% of whom went to a quick death. The train line to Auschwitz was extended in preparation, so that the Jews of Hungary could be taken straight to the gas chambers without unnecessary delays. Between May and June of 1944, 20,000 Jews a day were arriving at the death camps and the crematoria were operating 24 hours a day in an attempt to cope with the vast numbers.

In the early days, Rose was safer than most

Jews because she had papers from the Baptist church stating that she was a Christian missionary. Life was far from easy, however. She had to keep a very low profile and sought families to shelter her. One family threw her out because of the risk involved. Throughout the war, she could not even apply for rations, because this would mean automatic deportation. As the deportation of Jews to the labor camps became ever more frequent, Rose found shelter with a simple peasant woman, who showed her all the love of Jesus. Together they kept mournful watch from a window looking down on to the street below, crying to the Lord for the flock of Israel. Rose saw friends and neighbors with whom she had shared the Gospel, rounded up and taken away by the cart load.

She longed to go with them and tell them about the Messiah, the Hope of Israel. If she remained in hiding, who would tell them the Good News? Rose counseled with other believers about her growing desire to go with her people to the camps. Deeply concerned for her safety, her friends urged her to stay in hiding and to continue to minister to the believers. Rose knew that if the idea was not from God, she would never be able to stand under all of the horrors that she would encounter if she was taken to a concentration camp. She sought God's face and felt increasingly compelled by the Lord to join her people. When she knew God's will and needed no further confirmation, she went into the street and gave herself up into the hands of the SS officers. To the insulting cries of watching townspeople, Rose was herded into a cattle cart together with Jewish friends and neighbors, and taken to Auschwitz.

The people in the camp numbered one million. Mountains of women's hair, phylacteries and prayer shawls outside the crematorium were the only visible testimony of the thousands of victims. Living prisoners were employed in spreading huge cartfuls of human ashes over the fields.

Among the shabby masses, heads shorn, bodies scantily covered with grey sackcloth, Rose stood to attention for hours each morning in the bitter cold, enduring abuse, whipping and blows from the gun butts of German officers. Old men and women and any mothers with babies had been sent immediately for gassing. The officers were gruesomely faithful to their strict orders to work the remaining prisoners to death. With such vast numbers, they couldn't hope to gas everyone at once. Despite the horrors all around her, Rose knew the peace of the Lord and his presence with her. She was not afraid of death; it meant meeting face to face with her glorious Savior! At every opportunity, Rose witnessed from the Scriptures of the Jewish Messiah who died to save them from sin and death and give them everlasting life...

Find the whole story here: 
http://ntmu.net/?page_id=1532

Dear reader,

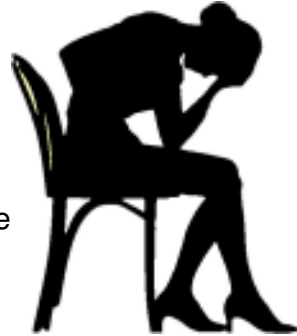
We think and we hope that you will enjoy this latest issue of **PRESSING ON!**

Like every other true Christian, you're in the "race", in the spiritual one. And you know that after a while it's easy to start dragging your feet, lose sight of the "finishing line", get side-tracked, faint, even turn back. **Pressing On!** is here to inform you, to encourage you and to challenge you about **counting on God's grace for all of the race...**

As Philippians 3 informs us, there's the **goal** and there's the **prize** that are set before us, but then Hebrews 10 tells us that the "**considering**", the "**stirring up**", the "**exhorting**" are the things **all** of us are involved in: "*Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*". It will be obvious to you that the 'considering, stirring up and exhorting' have everything to do with the "assembling". Jesus says that two or three in his name are sufficient for him to be very much present in the midst of them with all that He has to offer. It is absolutely basic for fruitful encouragement and challenge, that you and I plus other 'runners in the race' do so very humbly around HIM, looking to HIM and his open word. You too can be wonderfully used for your fellow "athletes". **Pressing On!** prepares and encourages the encouragers, and can prove to be a very worthwhile tool in your hands...

Picture yourself traveling round the planet, say from Canada, to Croatia, to Cameroon, to the Comoros, to Cambodia, to the Cook Islands, to Colombia or to Cuba. In every one of these countries you'll find true Christians. You may find some big groups, meeting in churches, and you'll find there are small groups, meeting in homes or wherever, even in prisons, but as you get to know them, you'll also find that among them a high percentage are feeling the effects of Satan's 3-D strategy - **Discouragement**, **Depression**, or outright **Defeat** - Christian "athletes" falling, or fallen, by the wayside. The crown laid up for them (2 Tim. 4:8) is receding and could be taken from them (Rev. 3:11).

*Discouraged
Depressed
Defeated*



Not in every country can such folks read English. In many of the 70 countries to which we send **Pressing On!**, English is not even the second language. However, there usually are individual Christians who know sufficient English to grasp the message. And some of these are receiving up to 30 or 40 copies for regular distribution.

We are fully persuaded that you too can become a most valuable encourager of the brethren! And we want you to plainly realize that **PRESSING ON!** is entirely at your disposal to help you, in other words, free of charge!

Please, consider the form below, pray over it, then fill out what applies and send it to us:

-
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 - Separately I am sending you names, addresses and e-addresses of Christian friends who have confirmed they would like to be on your mailing list, either for email or snailmail.
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1. Print this form, fill out what applies, sign it, then mail to:
Apartado 31, 29700 Vélez-Málaga, Spain. **Or:**
 2. Once printed and filled out, scan and email the form to: **presson@telefonica.net**

“And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward” - Mt. 10:42.