



# Oasis

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## God's Mystery Thriller

by Eitan Shishkoff

**T**he flight from Hong Kong to Osaka found me tired, but unable to sleep. With a personal movie screen imbedded in the seat in front of me, what was I to do, but surf through the inexhaustible film options available? I chose a mystery based on an unsolved series of murder cases in 1960's San Francisco.

I got pretty involved in the intricate story line, and as the actors finally closed in on the villain I was really looking forward to the solution. Right then the pilot's voice broke into the movie. "We will now be starting our final descent. This will conclude our entertainment program on this flight." I almost protested out loud. "Oh no! Now I'll have to find a copy of that film. I've have to find out how it ends."

### The Mystery: Israel's Salvation & Gentiles as Fellow Heirs

When I reached Osaka for an Asian conference on Israel and Messianic Jews, it hit me. The intrigue of a well-told mystery is just what God meant when he used that word to refer to the enigma of Jews and Gentiles being one in Messiah. In Romans 11:25-26 Paul says **"I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery...blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved..."** Again, writing to the Ephesians he says that God showed him by revelation, **"The mystery of Messiah, which in other ages was not made known to**

**the sons of men...that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs (with the Jewish disciples), of the same body."** (Eph 3:4-6)

As the Japanese-initiated event unfolded two things were strikingly evident. These were the harmony of numerous church leaders previously not so enthused to associate with each other (their description) and the hunger to understand and serve God's purposes for Asia and Israel together with us, their Israeli Messianic Jewish brothers. I was watching the "solution" to God's mystery thriller: "How will Israel be saved AND the Gentiles become true fellow heirs?" And it thrilled me.

### Africa and Europe Too

The following week African leaders gathered outside of Nairobi, Kenya for intensive prayer and teaching from Israeli Jewish believers, my teammates Avi, Marty and Marc. At November's outset, a group of Christian counselors and pastors in Great Britain listened attentively for an entire day to a series of messages on the Jewish roots of New Covenant faith. Soon after, German churches and evangelical Christians in city after city heard the story of one man's rediscovery of his Jewish heritage through Yeshua, aliyah to Israel and the renewal of apostolic faith in the land. (That storyteller would be me.)

These trips were not for fund-raising. Rather, we were invited to speak about the emerging Messianic movement in Israel. In each case we were received with honor, fascination, gratitude and desire for continued friendship. Our experiences strengthened the realization that God is moving in a concerted way to reunite the Jewish and Gentile portions of the body of Messiah world-wide.

### The Chambers of God's Heart: Israel and the Nations

A huge portion of the Bible is dedicated to describing the essential role of Israel in world redemption. Increasingly, around the globe, men and women of God are realizing the truth to which the Church has been largely blinded for 18 centu-

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ries - that God's promises to Israel are irrevocable (Romans 11:29) and that she will awaken to put faith in the true Messiah, Yeshua, before His second coming. God's passion for the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob throbs throughout His word. The apostle's cry in Romans 9:2,3 gives voice to that passion: **"...I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Messiah for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh."**

With so much focus on Israel and on Jewish believers, how are we to understand the Lord's heart for the nations, and integrate that dimension with His clear emphasis on Israel at the end of days? I believe one key is found in Isaiah 49. There, speaking to the Messiah, God says **"It is too small a thing that you should be my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth."** (Isaiah 49:6) God wants all men to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4); this points to our calling to continue reaching out to all peoples with the gospel.

The universality of Yeshua's atonement is well-established. **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."** (John 3:16) But the relationship of Israel and the nations is not merely that we walk with Yeshua on parallel pathways. The drama of God's closing act in history is that Jesus' Jewish and Gentile disciples become aligned in "solving" the mystery of the ages.

## The Five Clues of Isaiah 60

In his 60th chapter, Isaiah turns the spotlight on the nations and their end-time involvement with Israel's destiny. Here, I believe, are the clues that solve the mystery of Jew and Gentile at the end of the age. First, the Spirit will draw Yeshua's non-Jewish followers to an interest in Israel. This is exactly what is happening on every continent. **"The Gentiles shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising."**

(60:3) This happens in tandem with darkness covering the earth (v.2). Sound familiar? So, there is a simultaneous growing darkness and opposition to Israel (all we have to do is open today's paper to see that) AND a movement of Gentiles loving Israel and wanting to bless her. Here, then are five clues Isaiah presents to clear up the mystery of how God intends to work through Gentiles loyal to Him in bringing Israel back to the Lord.

1. **FINANCIAL RESOURCES.** **"The Wealth of the Gentiles will come to you"** (v.5 and 11)
2. **HELPING JEWS come HOME.** **"The ships...will come first to bring your sons from afar"** (v.9)
3. **INTERCESSORY PRAYER.** **"The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls"** (v. 10)
4. **REPENTANCE for ANTI-SEMITISM.** **"The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you"** (v.14)
5. **EQUIPPING for MINISTRY.** **"You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles, and milk the breast of kings"** (v.16, I understand "kings" in this context to mean mighty men of God, like Derek Prince)

## A Mystery Solved

After two wonderfully intense conferences in Osaka and Tokyo, plus a very full weekend of ministry, I took the return flight to Hong Kong. As I had hoped, the same mystery movie was available for viewing. Eager to see the end of the mystery, I opened the little screen and scrolled to the last scene I remembered. This time I got to see the ending. And though I'm not going to tell you how the movie ends, I'm delighted to have opened these few scenes from the mystery we are walking out together.

The more I learn of this mystery, the more thrilling it is. We are experiencing the long-promised release of love's resources coming toward Israel in waves. At a time when many are clamoring for Israel's punishment and rejection, it brings us bright hope, added courage and needed comfort to know that our Gentile family members are activated on behalf of their Israeli Messianic brothers and sisters. ✨

## Tents of Mercy and municipal social services team up for a Humanitarian Aid Fair



*Last month over 120 needy families received special aid packages from Tents of Mercy. Organization of the event was facilitated through the local social services office. Funding for this extravagant blessing was provided by a very special donor agency. A good time was had by all!*

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### Our Vision:

**Tents of Mercy** - to participate in today's historic exodus by assisting Israel's returning exiles.

**No spectators in the Kingdom** - to be a worshiping, sharing community based in homes, equipping each one for service.

**Come back Yeshua** - to welcome Yeshua home to Israel, by restoring the Jewish roots of New Covenant faith.

# HOW LONG?

By Marty Shoub

Living in Israel I cannot escape the constant reminders of eternity looming just over our horizon. Every day as I drive to the Ohalei Rachamim building I see Mt Carmel, an igneous reminder of God's covenant faithfulness to unfaithful Israel. Cana, where Yeshua first "manifested His glory" is just over the hills that guard the view from my front door. There are other more grim reminders too. About 90 minutes from my home one can still visit the altar to "the god of Dan." This cultic center has stood as a reproach to our nation since the days of the Judges. It is a reminder that the spiritual life of Israel is not all that it should be – there are still many worshipping at a strange altar. Not far from Dan you can climb down to the ruins of Gamla and see where Titus and his cavalry breached through the wall, and slaughtered thousands. Thousands more jumped off the cliff at the top of the city rather than face the Roman sword. The echo of all Jewish suffering, from Egypt's slave quarries to the Nazi death camps reverberate through this gap of crumbling stone. Everywhere I turn I am haunted by the question, "How long, oh Lord?" How long until you again send your fire to turn our hearts back to you? How long until you display your glory again? How long until we altogether cease from idols? How long until the suffering and persecution finally ends?

"How long?" is an interrogative refrain throughout the scriptures. Waiting is just part of the deal. The Psalmist pleads, "**O Lord God of Hosts, how long will you be angry against the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in great measure.**" (Ps. 80:4, 5) The Jewish people have suffered, we all know this. Much of our suffering is our own fault, we have broken faith with God's covenant and we have suffered the consequences. But our suffering cannot be solely explained as the consequences

of our failures. Every nation that God has used to correct us has gone past the limits of God's intentions, to inflict cruelty beyond measure.

The cry, "How long?" is coupled with a plea for remedy, "**Restore us O God; cause your face to shine, and we will be saved.**" (Ps. 80:3) Our restoration is tied to the light of His countenance shining upon us. Without His light shining on us we are blind. And blindness has been our problem for a very long time. Moses lamented, "**Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.**" (Deut. 29:4) Regrettably, our condition has not improved since Moses' day. We are still lacking the heart, eyes and ears to perceive. Moses decried the blindness in his day and in Paul's day the blindness had yet to lift: "**But even to this day, when Moses is read a veil lies on their heart.**" (II Cor. 3:15) Paul describes our condition as a veil; a shroud that darkens our understanding and keeps us from seeing the light of Yeshua. What may seem obvious to New Covenant believers is hidden from the Jewish people by layer upon layer of veiling. There is a veil we have wrapped around our own eyes because we refused to see (See, John chapter 9) and there are veils of offence and woundedness that the enemy has used others to wrap around our eyes. The veil of II Corinthians has been fortified with veil upon veil of Anti Semitism, Christian supersessionism and rabbinic reaction.



The altar to the god of Dan



The breach in Gamla's Wall

Paul's observation includes an important qualification: **"Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."** (II Cor. 3:16) Turning is not a simple issue. How do we return when we are blind? The Psalmist understands that before we can turn we must first be turned: **"Return, we beseech you, O God of hosts; look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine...then we will not turn back from you; revive us and we will call upon your name."** (Ps.80:14,18). When Adonai turns us and shines the light of His countenance upon us we will see and return. Oh do we ever need a visitation!

Every Shabbat at Tents of Mercy, as is customary in all synagogues, we close our Torah reading service with the song, "Ets Chaim He" (it is a tree of life). We recall Solomon's comment on finding wisdom (in Torah): **"She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her. Her ways are pleasantness and all her paths are peace."** (Prov. 3: 17,18) This beautiful song about the beauty and

goodness of the Torah ends with Jeremiah's anguished cry from Lamentations 5:21: **"Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we will be restored (or turned); Renew our days as of old."** Just as Paul said, the Torah is holy, just and good (Rom. 7:12), the problem lies within our unturned hearts (Rom. 7:14). Sometimes I think the most audacious promise in the Bible is **"All Israel shall be saved."** I am not trying to denigrate my people. Believe me; the cry "How long?" burns deep within my soul. But it seems like we are so far from this promise that its eventuality seems too far off to bring any present consolation.

In Romans 11 Paul calls this blinding a mystery. A mystery that we should appreciate and understand in the light of God's covenant promises: **"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..."** (Rom. 11:25) The blindness is not permanent. God will turn us and we will be turned, but when does the *"until"* arrive? **"...until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."**

I hope my Gentile brothers and sisters will appreciate the magnitude of this statement. It is not just an end times' event marker to place on an eschatology chart. It is the weight of thousands of years of suffering the Jewish people have endured that the full blessing of God can come to the nations. Is God unjust? Of course not, but please consider: would any other nation (for we are all sinners) have fared any better? Through our failures riches have come to the nations (Rom. 11:12). We have endured blindness and the accompanying suffering for the sake of these nations.

Adonai called Israel to be a "kingdom of priests." As priests Israel's intercession was not for Israel alone but for the whole world. Despite our blindness and our failures, God always had a remnant whose intercession called to heaven to send Messiah – the restorer of Jacob and the light to the nations. The light of the nations has come and Israel still waits to see that light. Today, may everyone who stands as a priest in His kingdom, both Jew and Gentile, join in intercession crying out to the Lord, "Spare your people." May we all seek His kingdom first to hasten the day when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. Then the veils will be lifted, we shall be turned and "all Israel shall be saved." Amen. ✡