

Milk & HONEY & BLOOD

Where We Are & What Comes Next

Why War Inhabits the Holy Land

Deuteronomy 7:1-26

1 Kings 11:9-14

2 Chronicles 14:1-15

The Lord connected peace within the Holy Land to the keeping of His covenant. During the times Israel held faith in the Lord, there were measures of peace. The greatest stretch of this peace came within the fifty years of Solomon's reign. If the claims of Islam held truth, the Lord would have been able to mark their conquering of the Holy Land with peace. Instead, they warred among themselves. Neither was there peace after the Crusaders conquered in the Name of Christ, but He Himself had claimed, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). For the church, "peace on earth" comes with cross-bearing.

WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT SAYS OF ISRAEL

Luke 19:41-46

Acts 7:44-60

Romans 10:1-4; 11:25-32

Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed. Forty years later, Jerusalem was destroyed. The church continued to preach mercy to Jews as well as Gentiles. They also made clear that God's presence was not limited to the earthly Zion. The Messiah had come and Immanuel was with His people in Word and Sacrament. "Israel" could not be defined as a bloodline. Abraham is father by faith. Believing Gentiles are grafted into the vine of Israel, while unbelieving branches— even though holding Jewish blood—are broken off. The mission of grace to the Jews does not end. They have God's Word, though a veil remains over the eyes of those without Christ (2 Corinthians 3:13-14). So, the Christian missionaries always started with preaching to the Jews (Acts 17:1-2).

WHAT COMES NEXT

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Revelation 12:7-13:10

First and foremost, Christians should rest content that Paul says we don't need anything new written to us about what comes next. Jesus is coming back and the faithful win. That is the ultimate "next".

Plumbing Scripture's mysteries further, we find there are specific warnings about how Satan tries to undercut faith. Misleaders will originate among believers. Misleaders will even be given miraculous signs and an air of invulnerability. They will achieve earthly power. Where the church's victories come by the Word and include martyrdom, the misleaders will promise earthly safety and glory (Luke 4:6-8).

Christians can look back at the promise of the Crusaders. They set about to achieve reunification of the church and safe access to the Holy Land for pilgrims. By force of arms, they acquired these things for a brief spell only to end up with the church more fractured, their earthly enemies more united and empowered, and the Holy Land lost again. When Peter attacked enemies with a sword in Gethsemane, Jesus commanded him to put it away (John 18:11).

The great error of the church in America spurns the cup the Father has poured for us. Does the church believe bearing the cross is effective? Or do we believe we have to take up the weapons of the world to "fight" the good fight. When John looked at the throne above all thrones, He saw a slain Lamb.