

The Lord's  
Prayer  
for  
Aliyah

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It could reasonably be said that the whole burden of Scripture points towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God and the return of the King! Deep within the heart of the ministry of Yeshua (Jesus), the concern of the return of Jewish exiles from the lands they were scattered was a priority.

*Aliyah* is a central priority of the Gospel of the Kingdom, not only in the return of the Jewish people but also in the healing of the blood-soaked relations between Christians and Jews. By a clear understanding of the Scriptures, we can indeed be a part of the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).

When the disciples of Yeshua approached Him as a group, they could have asked about any number of things: how to heal the sick, how to raise the dead, or how to cast out demons. In the gospels, the disciples as a united group approached their master over the issue of prayer (Matthew 6).

Yeshua responded by giving them a model of what at the time was the structure of prayer for emergency situations. Such prayers had clearly defined elements, and one of them was to pray for the return of the Jewish exiles.

Yeshua observes this priority, and the very first petition in what is commonly called “the Lord’s Prayer” is “hallowed be thy Name,” or in more modern versions, “may your Name be sanctified.” There is only one portion of scripture that explains how the Lord’s Name may be sanctified, and this is found in a passage that in the Hebrew Bible is headed “**Kiddush ha Shem**,” the sanctification of God’s Holy Name, found in Ezekiel 36:16 and the following verses.

On 14 occasions throughout this passage of scripture, the Lord says “I will.” On each occasion, it speaks of a benefit of the return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland. The benefits are enjoyed by God, the Jewish people, the church, those who are “far away,” and the physical land itself. Whereas we could say that Psalm 105 is a short form of the understanding of the relationship between God, the Land, and the Jewish people, we could say that the Ezekiel passage under consideration is a shorthand version of the complete ethos of Christian-sponsored *aliyah*.

**God** The passage in Ezekiel 36 clearly states that God's Holy Name is profaned amongst the nations while the Jewish people are in exile (vv 20-23). God, out of concern for the holiness of His Name (v 22), is going to bring about their return to the Land. It is important to note that when God refers to His name, He is not referring to a "noise label" for purposes of identification. In the scriptures, names carry with them the qualities of the person, hence the practice of changing names. A vivid example is in the Book of Ruth, where following the death of her sons, Naomi says to Ruth, "No longer call me Naomi [comfort] but call me Mara [bitter]." (Ruth 1:20-21).

In Ezekiel 36, God is effectively saying He is concerned for His reputation or His character. The primary benefit is accorded to God, whose Name is shown to be Holy by the return of the Jewish people to the land in fulfillment of His words to the prophets. The first petition of the Lord's Prayer, then, can be seen as reference to, or even commentary on, this passage of prophecy.

**The Jewish people** benefit in several ways, but mostly by salvation becoming imminent upon the remnant. According to the prophecy in Ezekiel, they will be washed clean with water (v25), given a heart of flesh in place of a heart of stone (v26), be filled with the Holy Spirit (v 27), the Lord will be their God and they will be His people (v28), they will be settled in their ancient towns and the cities will be rebuilt (v 33), and the desolate land will be cultivated (v 34). The fulfillment of vv 33-24 have seen wonderful realization, as is well known to anyone who has visited the land and seen the desert that has indeed bloomed like a rose.

**The Church** The church benefits by the inclusion of the Jewish people, who bring with them the richness of their heritage, as well as biblical and linguistic history. Paul expresses this clearly in the Epistle to the Romans. "If their transgression means riches for the world and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring....If their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead" (Rom 11:11, 15). The former passage may be compared with a monochrome picture being transformed into color. In verse 15, it has traditionally been considered that the reference to life from death refers to the spiritual deadness of the Jewish people. It may

be worth considering that the passage may have a secondary application to the church, which has suffered the consequences of its own anti-Semitism in practicing a faith that has centered more on death than life. This notion is strengthened by Paul's insistence that he is speaking to the Gentiles (v 13).

**Those Who Do Not Recognize the Lord** Isaiah 11:11 speaks of the end times, when the Lord raises a banner to the nations. In the scriptures, and as illustrated in ancient military history, banners are rallying points, points to run to in order to gain protection, symbols of belonging, or signs of royal rule or residence. The banner in this instance is the Lord returning the people from **the four corners of the earth**. The event is closely linked to the return of the Messiah as mentioned above. The return will be of such magnitude that all the world, and particularly those who do not know the Lord, will pay attention and be given an opportunity to respond before it is too late. The Lord, in His grace and mercy, uses the return as the last great sign prior to His return.

**The Physical Land** The passage speaks of a restoration of the physical geography of the land of Israel. Before 1948, most of the land was desolate. In 1918, when the British took on administration of its Middle East Mandate, including so-called Palestine, there were so few trees each one had to be numbered. With the advent of the rebirth of the state of Israel in 1948, the fulfillment of prophecy began to unfold and the barren desert began to bloom like a rose (Isaiah 35:2).

## About the Author

Dr. Frederick Wright and his wife, Maria, have worked with the Jewish people, with emphasis on the return, for 26 years in the former Soviet Union, former Soviet satellites, Ethiopia, and Israel. Author of a number of books and numerous academic articles on Jewish related matters, Fred is considered a pioneer and leading authority in the study of Christian anti-Semitism and post-Auschwitz theology.

## About Ezra International

Since its founding in 1995, Ezra International has assisted more than 70,000 Jewish people from across the globe return to Israel, the land of their forefathers. Ezra International representatives work in Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, and other countries of the former Soviet Union, South America, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Ezra International remains committed to assisting the Jewish people in agreement with the promises and prophecies of the Scriptures (Isaiah 49:22, Jeremiah 30:3, Isaiah 14:1, Jeremiah 3:18, Ezekiel 28:25, Ezekiel 37:21).

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