



Kérugma[®] Bulletin

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A Newsletter to the Conquerors in Christ

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"Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away His judgments against you. He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you will fear disaster no more" (Zeph. 3:14-15).

"SHOUT FOR JOY, O DAUGHTER OF ZION "

- Naas le Roux

How well informed are you on the current situation in Israel? We hardly receive a news bulletin these days without mention of a suicide bombing, shooting or some other tragic event occurring in the land where the Bible has its origin. Our Lord Jesus Christ was born there and fulfilled His ministry there; He was crucified, buried and rose from the dead in that land. He will return there as when He ascended, to the Mount of Olives, when the time for His advent is fulfilled.

How should we understand and stand by the people of Israel? Dr. Randall Smith who has been staying in Israel for more than 11 years was invited to speak at the Feast of Tabernacles that took place in Jerusalem from 1-8 October 2001. We were invited to film the event as part of an international camera team and had the opportunity to film the seminar he presented. He spoke about the term *The Daughters of Zion* as it is used in the Old Testament. It was so informative that we immediately decided to produce a video on this teaching. It now forms part of the series ***The Word on Location***, of which *Psalms 23 - The Shepherd and His Sheep* and *How Jesus Taught* - also forms part.

This production is called *The Daughters of Zion - Understanding the people and the land of Israel*. The title clearly illustrates what the video is about, namely how to understand the people of modern Israel. It is not possible to fully explain all that comes to light in the video. It is however important to mention that in his explanation of the term *Daughters of Zion* as it appears in the Old Testament, Randall Smith basically shows the parallel between the people who were known by that term from that time and the people of Israel today.

On the video you will see an ancient map of the world depicting Jerusalem as the centre of the earth. From the circle in the middle, the surrounding continents are drawn as if they are petals of a flower radiating from the core. This is exactly what Israel was in that time: a land bridge between the great continents. The *Via Maris* or Way of the Sea was one of the great trade routes of that period and connected the North and South via the coastland of Israel. Traders frequented this route in large caravans with their precious cargoes.

Randall Smith explains that part of Abraham's strategy to make contact with these people was to dig wells where they could rest and water their animals.

The people of the land were therefore

continually exposed to cross-cultural influences. They were also the innocent victims when the surrounding countries waged war against each other. These armies would rape, pillage and burn as far as they went on their way to war.

This, as well as the wars in which Israel herself was involved throughout the centuries, led to the cities of Israel being destroyed many a time. Some of these cities were then later rebuilt on top of their own ruins. With the destruction and rebuilding a site became elevated and a small hill was later formed. In Hebrew this is known as a "Tel" (hence a name such as Tel Aviv) and archaeologists also call it a "mound". The sides of such a Tel or mound would run down at an angle and would take the shape of a skirt of a woman. The city walls would be built at the edge of the Tel. This made the city difficult to penetrate by an attacking army, as they first had to negotiate the steep mound before they could think of scaling the walls.

The daughters of the city were not the occupants of the city. The city itself was for the rich people who could afford a house in the city. The common people stayed on the "outskirts" of the city, outside the city walls in tents. Because they stayed outside the city and lived below this mound that looked like a skirt, they were called the daughters of the city.

Henceforth the term "*Daughters of Zion*". They are the actual people of Jerusalem. They lived outside the city walls. During times of war they were the people hardest hit. They would of course want to take refuge inside the city walls when the enemy came. However, the food and water resources inside the city were limited and the rich people would not want the poor "daughters" of the city to all come inside the city gates when the

enemy was approaching. When these poor people had to flee before approaching attackers and seek refuge inside the city, they would find themselves on the wrong side of the locked city gates with the enemy on their heels.

Since God started fulfilling His promise to bring Israel back to the land in 1948, according to Ezekiel 36:24, the people of the land of Israel found themselves once again in a difficult position. Randall illustrates in this video how punch-drunk everyone in this land is. He shows us the tribulation through which the people of the land have gone since the Palestinian Intifada (Uprising) started in September 2000.

The people of the land are, by way of speaking, the punch bag of the world. The great superpowers make decisions, but the people of the land bear the cost. Many Christians also want to come to Israel and give advice. They propose a quick political solution to the problem without really understanding the people or the situation. The video presents footage of the land of Israel and also of the way of life of her people today. You will begin to develop a new understanding of the situation there and you will learn how to pray for the modern "*Daughters of Zion*".

How wonderful it is to see that the Lord has not forgotten His promises to His people. So many of God's prophecies are in the process of fulfilment over the last couple of years and one can only yearn with hope and anticipation, prayerfully reminding the Lord of the rest of them, as He commands in Isaiah 62:6-7.

In our introductory quote, the Lord says that a day will come when Israel and Judah will rejoice. A day when He will take away His Judgements against them and will clear away their enemies and when the King of Israel, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be with them (Zeph. 3:14-15).

But do the current people of the land live in anticipation of the fulfilment of this prophecy? There is much that the children of God can do to bring these people to the knowledge of Christ. The most important is to pray for them. Therefore it is important to understand their current situation.

It would also help to take the book of the prophet Zephaniah and read it in conjunction with this video. The video is based on this book of the Bible. In it, Randall Smith shows that according to Scripture events even worse than the fall of the World Trade Centre towers on September 11, 2001, will follow in the near future. These events will involve Israel and the whole world. Through all of this, Israel will be taken through the furnace. The refining will eventually result in Israel looking upon the Lord Jesus Christ at His return as the One that they pierced "and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn" (Zech. 12:10).

Therefore we have the comfort that Israel's triumph, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, will overshadow all the pain, sorrow and suffering over the ages by far. That is the reason for the command: "Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel!"

Although the message of Randall Smith on

Daughters of Zion was recorded during October 2001, the contents are even more applicable today. I have just returned from a 10-day film shoot with Randall in Israel. With me were Mr. Jack Carstens of Cape Town and Mr. Johan Roos of Pretoria. The aim of our visit was to complete the filming of background material for a series of videos on the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When one looks at Israel today, you get a burning desire to give the video *Daughters of Zion* to every Christian so that they can know how to pray for the people of that suffering land.

On the first day after our arrival there we were due to pay a visit to Meggido with a tour group led by Randall. (You will see Meggido on this video). Just before our departure, we got the news that an explosives-laden car had just rammed a bus full of people on the route that we were to follow to Meggido. The road would be closed for hours and we had to take another route. Ten days later, once back in South Africa, we received news of a bombing of a bus from Gilo. Randall Smith and his family live in Gilo. On this trip I made sure to film his house with the sandbag shelters before the windows. Bullets fly from across the valley on a regular basis. There are a number of bullet holes in walls of their house and some of the sandbags are half full due to punctures from bullets. Randall told us that Saher Rizkallah, a Christian Palestinian we came to know, was on his way from Randall's house to the Wilderness Tabernacle where he works when the bus exploded behind him. Randall's wife, Dottie, was due to take this same bus to town that morning, but just before she was about to depart she decided to rather take the car. Penny Valentine from *Christian Friends of Israel* writes that two of the workers from their organisation, that always take that same bus to work, had other appointments and therefore were thankfully not on the bus on that day.

Is it not wonderful to see how the Lord protected so many of His children against this bombing? It is necessary to pray for the people, especially the children that have been injured in these explosions. There are Christians such as the *Christian Friends of Israel*, who visit and comfort these people. We can only pray that these people can come to know the Lord Jesus as their Messiah.

Watching the video *The Daughters of Zion - Understanding the people and the land of Israel*, will help you to better understand the people of the land of Israel. Due to the Intifada there are many people, Jew and Palestinian, who are without an income. The economy of the country is greatly dependent on tourism. Due to the war there have been almost no tourism for the last two years. For us this presents a golden opportunity because we get to film many of the sites that would have been very difficult to film had there been the normal throng of tourists.

It is however heart-rending to see how many more businesses are closed each time we return there and how many more people are without a job and without food.

Randall and Dottie have recently started a project during the occupation of the Palestinian territories to supply the Christian Palestinians in

the suburb across from their house with food. When none of these people could risk leaving their houses they were supplied with what they needed. The funds for this came from Christians from across the world.

Maybe it is necessary that Christians from South Africa will pray more specifically for children of God in Israel today. The Christians there are few in number. Our prayers will strengthen them to continue in trying circumstances to be living witnesses of the grace of God.

When you drive through certain parts of Israel, it almost seems as if there is no awareness of the existing dangers. Where the hotels and restaurants in certain parts have long since been closed down, some restaurants in other parts are filled with feasting crowds. Of normal crime such as petty thievery there are almost no evidence. Locals can't understand why I am so careful to lock my equipment up everywhere we go! In general one feels safer in Israel than back home in South Africa. On the Sabbath you can see families relaxing in parks, children playing everywhere and old people going for long, leisurely walks in the evening. This is something many of us in South Africa don't know anymore.

Yet, the Intifada has left its mark and there is much need – especially amongst the Palestinians who are frequently under curfew. It is under such

trying circumstances that people who love the Lord Jesus Christ require understanding and support to indeed be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. They are Christians that live in a mostly Muslim world.

A PRAYER REQUEST

We were able to film the remaining clips required for the next videos in a very short time. We frequently had to work under trying circumstances. On one such occasion we were harassed by a group of Palestinian children that tried to prevent us from filming Randall's message by screaming and shouting and waving their hands in front of the camera. They shouted at us to go away because it was their land. Many of these children are apparently taught from a very young age to hate everyone that is not an Arab.

We have a need for you to pray for wisdom and strength to properly edit these videos.

It is one thing to film the messages, but it is quite another story to put it all together and to create the correct transitions and necessary effects. It promises to be a very good series, but a lot of wisdom, strength and health are needed to complete it.

Please pray for the whole Kérugma team.

WHAT PRICE FOR A BIBLE?

In the remote highlands of Vietnam, Hau a Ca rose early and packed his bag with sufficient food for a two day hike. He was both nervous and excited as he commenced his two day walk through steep mountains and valleys to reach the main road.

The thirty families of his village had been saving six months for this day. Money is scarce in the highlands, but each family had a target of about 10 000 dong (\pm R8.00) to raise the 300 000 dong (\pm R240.00) required to cover the cost of Hau's journey to and from the city.

A very old bus came lurching down the road where Hau, tired from his two-day walk through the jungle, stood waiting. It would be another half day, over a rough and winding road, dodging motorcycles and bicycles, before the bus would finally deliver Hau to the train station. Using a

portion of the funds raised by his village, Hau boarded a train in the evening for the final "leg" of his journey.

Arriving in the city the next morning, Hau made his way cautiously in search of a pre-arranged contact. His task was relatively simple yet so very dangerous for a Christian. He had to come to the city to fill his bag with just five Bibles and five songbooks. He trusted the Lord, but in God's perfect will, protection from arrest, imprisonment and torture is not guaranteed.

Two and a half years ago, two Christian leaders, Vang, Xa Chi and Vang Xin Min, made a similar trip to the city. On their return trip they were followed and then intercepted by plain-clothed police, who searched their bags and discovered their Christian contraband. They were arrested and sentenced to twenty months in a labour

camp, a high price for the several Bibles and songbooks that they were carrying.

Hau successfully made contact with his supplier. He then slept one night in the city and the next day began the return trip to the highlands with his goods, five Bibles and five songbooks. He was carrying in his bag a small treasure, priceless to the Christians of his village.

Many, many times Bibles and Christian literature are confiscated when the police raid the highland villages of Vietnam. At least 30 tribes, consisting of more than 500000 tribal Christians, suffer police raids, along with arrests, interrogation, imprisonment and torture.

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