

April 29

Scriptures: Read Luke 1 & 2

Key Verse: “My eyes have seen Your salvation... a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” (Luke 2:30, 32)

Overview

I’m a Gentile; a Gentile who, with his family, lived among Jewish friends and neighbors for seven years in Jerusalem. We speak Hebrew (Kathy and the children, fluently—I, not so fluently), and we have an intimate knowledge of, and great respect for, Jewish culture and religion. In fact, even after being back in Canada for a few years, our kids still feel more Israeli than Canadian.

Friends and acquaintances here have often remarked, “It must have been wonderful to live in the Holy Land! Especially at Christmas and Easter!” Well, yes it was—but not for the reasons you’d expect. Christmas is basically a non-event, at least in terms of the Israeli calendar. There are special events in “Manger Square” on Christmas Eve in Bethlehem, but in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and all places in between, Christmas day is just like any other day. At Easter you’ll see groups of Roman Catholic or Orthodox pilgrims carrying life-like crosses along the Via Dolorosa in the Old City, and Protestant groups holding a sunrise service at the Garden Tomb, but again, for Israelis, generally, it’s just another day. That’s is remembered not by His own but by the “Goyim”, the Gentiles from the “outside”. Right now, Jesus is anything but “the glory of Your people Israel”.

But He is “revelation to the Gentiles”. Which suggests that Simeon, as he held the eight-day-old infant Jesus, spoke prophetically. The notion that Jesus would be a revelation to the Gentiles was definitely novel, and undoubtedly future. That future, however, is now—we Gentiles have received the message. And Israel has yet to embrace the baby, So, even as I write these words and you read them, we’re living in an historically dynamic tension between the “time of the Gentiles” and the day when Israel will recognize her Messiah. What a day that will be! And it may be soon. Simeon’s words will be fulfilled.

Prayer

Thank You Lord for the Light to bring revelation to us as we are Gentiles. May we let our light shine to all others including Your people Israel.