SONG AND PRAISE EVENING

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| *“The Hope of Israel”* |

**Introduction: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Narrators:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Opening prayer by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Introduction

The phrase “Hope of Israel” sums up the character and the purpose of God with the earth and our hope of salvation. It puts into practical terms the gospel of life in Jesus Christ and the promise of an inheritance forever in the Land for those who are the seed of Abraham. This Hope, in its ultimate fulfillment, will see Jesus as King on the throne of David, supported by immortal princes. God willing, we hope to be amongst this selected group of immortals. We will rule over a righteous nation established in God’s Land, with the capital of the world being Jerusalem.

Tonight we want to have a look at God’s love for Israel – particularly focusing on the new Jerusalem in the future age. Yahweh has said, *“I have chosen Zion, I have desired it for my habitation. This is my rest forever – here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” (Psalm 132v13-14).* Since Yahweh desires to dwell in Zion, we also long for Yahweh to accomplish *“the set time in which He will favour Zion” (Psalm 102v13).* We should strive to live as citizens of Zion, awaiting the glorious day when the whole Israel of God, both Jew and Gentile, will combine to form God’s immortal family.

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The nation of Israel began when God called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees and made promises to him, and then to his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. Faithful Abraham was promised the land as an everlasting possession. This promise was not just to Abraham, but also his seed. We do not have to be a natural Jew to be part of this seed … we can be adopted into Abraham’s family by faith and baptism into Christ.

*Galatians 3v26-29* - *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

*Ephesians 2v11-19 - “Wherefore remember, that we being in time past Gentiles in the flesh ..... at that time we were without Christ, being aliens from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus, we, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Now therefore we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.”*

**Hymn 316 - “Great God of Abram, hear our prayer”**

Natural Israel repeatedly failed to understand what God required of them.

*Jeremiah 7v25-26 – “Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.”*

Their ultimate ignorance was shown in the crucifixion of their Messiah, the promised seed of Abraham. Do we know what God requires of us? Do we reject His wisdom and His chastening?

Romans 9v31-33 - “But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

*Romans 11v20-21 - “…Be not highminded, but fear:  For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.”*

**Hymn 318 - “O God of Abraham we pray to Thee”**

This wickedness caused God to take the Hope of Israel to the Gentiles. This is how we have come to be part of God’s family. But Yahweh has not cast away His people Israel … He is still working with them as He was in the days of old.

*Ezekiel 34:12,13,30  “As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD.”*

God is re-enacting the Exodus and bringing His people back to the land of Israel. He is bringing them from all nations of the world where they have been scattered, and gathering them to their ancient homeland and their beloved city. Truly, in fairly recent history we have witnessed the miracle of a nation that has been re-born.

**Hymn 320 - “Oh! mourn ye for Zion”**

Nehemiah 1v8-11 - “Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandest thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations; But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, who thou hast redeemed by thy great power and by thy strong hand.”

God’s promises will come to pass! He is working among the nations to bring the time when Zion will be elevated and we can dwell there, for it is his chosen place!

**O Jerusalem**

We wait the time long promised

When Israel shall rejoice,

And all shall praise the Father

With one united voice.

When Jew and Greek one house shall seek,

One king they shall adore,

And Zion’s gate be opened wide

To blessings evermore.

In every age a love has kindled

Brethren’s hearts within,

For Yahweh’s chosen city

And for its future King.

This people pray with longing

For Jerusalem’s release,

And for the things that herald

Its everlasting peace.

*Isaiah 62v1-2 - “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Yahweh shall name.”*

**Hymn 315 - “For Zion’s sake I will not rest”**

It may even be our work to carry this everlasting gospel to the world and tell them that the Lord is now reigning on the earth in Zion! Our message will be of comfort and peace to a troubled world. People will want to learn about God and the peace that comes from knowing Him and walking in His ways.

*Isaiah 32v1, 17-18* - *“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting places.”*

*Zechariah 8v8* - *“And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”*

*Zechariah 8v20-23* - *“Thus saith Yahweh of hosts: It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before Yahweh and to see Yahweh of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek Yahweh of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before Yahweh. Thus saith Yahweh of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.”*

**Hymn 311 - “Blow ye the trumpet, blow”**

God’s covenant with Israel is everlasting. The time of their scattering and oppression will soon be over and the year of Jubilee is near!

*Jeremiah 31v35-36* - “*Thus saith Yahweh, which giveth the sun for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; Yahweh of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith Yahweh, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.”*

*Jeremiah 33v14,15 “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.”*

**Hymn 317 - “Hear what God, the Lord, hath spoken”**

Isaiah asks us to picture Zion’s peace as a river flowing from Jerusalem (48v18). Ezekiel reminds us that one day God will make a ‘covenant of peace’ with Israel in the vicinity of its walls (37v26). Haggai tells us that in Jerusalem, Yahweh will give peace (2v9). Zechariah encourages us with a wonderful vision of the man whose name is the Branch, building the Temple in Jerusalem and establishing peace in that place (6v13). And the Psalmist asks us to ‘pray for the peace of Jerusalem’ (122v6).

Today, Jerusalem is filled with everything but peace and righteousness. We must wait with eager anticipation the time when “peace shall be within its walls and prosperity within its palaces”.

*Psalm 122* - *“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of Yahweh. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of Yahweh, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of Yahweh. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of Yahweh our God I will seek thy good.”*

**Hymn 61 - “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”**

*Revelation 21v1-4* - *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”*

Surely the words of our Lord Jesus Christ will soon come to pass! The angels of God are continually working to bring God’s plan with Israel to completion. We long for the time when peace and security will exist in God’s chosen land and throughout the whole world. What a glorious time it will be when the former things are passed away.

**Hymn 89 - “Hallelujah, God be honoured”**

The Jews are still God’s chosen people, even though many of them are still in blindness concerning their Messiah and concerning God’s purpose with the earth. The time of the re-establishment of God’s kingdom on the earth is not far away. In that day, the Jews will finally recognize and accept Christ as their Messiah.

Jerusalem will be made the capital of the whole world. No longer will there be conflict, war and terror in this city. No longer will people live in fear of suicide bombers. Christ will rule in peace from Zion.

*Revelation 22v3-5* - *“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*

It is our prayer that we may all be written in that book of life, and be amongst the accepted in that great day. We will then be able to appreciate and experience what true peace really means!

We will now end our evening of song and praise with the words of hymn 379. This hymn speaks of the promise God has for Jerusalem and the characteristics of the people He desires to dwell in that city. May we be there to see the wonderful things destined for this glorious city.

*Psalm 24v3-5* - *“Who shall ascend into the hill of Yahweh? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from Yahweh, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.”*

**Hymn 379 - “Most glorious things are spoken, Jerusalem of thee”**

**Closing prayer by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**