

Piercing the Darkness with Prophetic Praise - by Karen Davis

In my earliest days as a Jewish believer in Jesus, the unspeakable joy of knowing God's love swept over my life. New songs flooded my heart and I was consumed with singing about my love affair with Jesus. Alongside these wonderful, exhilarating feelings, I was awakened as never before to the deep pain and comfortless grief of my own Jewish people. Centuries of anti-semitism perpetrated by so-called "Christians" in the name of Christ created thick walls of resistance in Jewish people to even hearing the name of Jesus. Most Jews today remain blind to their own Jewish Messiah and stand outside the gates of His healing love, unable to enter into His goodness. After the atrocities of the Holocaust, many Jews arrived in Israel with their essential belief in God shattered.

As the Lord began to lead me into the depths of His heart in intercession and travail, I cried out to Him as Paul did in Romans 9: "I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart, for I could wish that I myself was accursed from Christ for my brethren....who are Israelites." During that time He placed in my heart His promise that one day I would live in the land of my inheritance and would share His gift of love with my people, Jesus' brethren according to the flesh.

That day came in the summer of 1989 when my husband David and I immigrated to Israel, leaving behind the world of theater and the arts that had once drawn us both to New York City. I knew from my own experience as a Jew coming to know Jesus that it was not with "persuasive words of wisdom but in a demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4) that my eyes had been opened to the truth of who He is. Just like Peter, truly flesh and blood did not reveal it to me. I knew as we settled into a neighborhood of Holocaust survivors on Mount Carmel that in ourselves we had no power that could possibly convince one of these precious ones that Jesus was the way to their salvation and healing. The multi-layered walls of misunderstanding and

resistance to His name appeared before us as an immovable mountain, but the word of the Lord came to us as it did to Zechariah, "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit."

We began by reaching out to the drug addicts of Haifa, Jews and Arabs, those who had already lost hope in themselves, and were more willing than most in Israel to open their hearts to Yeshua ("Jesus" in Hebrew). We saw the resurrection power of the Lord set these men free from addictions. We soon realized the Lord was calling us to plant a congregation that would serve as a community for these men and also be a place other Israelis could experience Jesus for the first time. As we began to search for an appropriate meeting place for our new congregation which became known as "Kehilat HaCarmel" (Carmel Assembly) the Lord opened a door for us at the very top of Mount Carmel, in the area where Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal (see 1 Kings 18).

As the worship leader of the congregation, I was keenly aware that the Lord had given us a strategic assignment on this high place. His word came to me from Isaiah 42:11-13: "Shout from the top of the mountains, let them give glory to the Lord...the Lord will go forth like a warrior, like a man of war, He will prevail against his enemies." He was clearly calling us to take an offensive stand, as Elijah did, to declare triumphantly the victory of the Lord Yeshua (Jesus), Adonai Tzevaot (the Lord of armies) over the powers of darkness. We were learning that our city of Haifa, built all across the slopes of Mount Carmel, had the highest concentration of Satanism and New Age cults in Israel. Many were deceived by the modern-day prophets of Baal and the spirit of Jezebel was clearly still entrenched here.

I understood from these verses in Isaiah that the role of worship would be central to the battle set before us, that as we would stand in faith, giving glory to the Lord, immovable in the face of the enemy, He Himself would fight the battle and prevail. Our part was to "position ourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 20:17). Our worship was to be characterized by a prophetic "shout of victory," seeing and proclaiming that

victory by faith, not by sight -- just as the singers went out before the army in the time of Jehosaphat saying, " 'Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever!' Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes" (2 Chronicles 20:21-22).

While many beautiful praise and worship songs had been written in Hebrew by the believers who preceded us, most of the worship music in the Israeli Messianic congregations was written in minor keys and tended to have a mournful sound. We were having difficulty with this limited repertoire of songs in Hebrew "breaking through" into the presence of God, beyond the heavy clouds of resistance to Yeshua over this land. We also noticed when we first arrived in Israel that many in the struggling body of Messiah seemed defeated and discouraged, beaten down by the difficult spiritual atmosphere. With a sense of urgency, we tried importing and translating into Hebrew some of our favourite worship songs in English, but discovered that the anointing that was on those songs back in our congregation in the U.S. was often missing when we sang them at Kehilat HaCarmel.

So we began fervently seeking the Lord to release to us the songs that would equip us to "shout unto God with a voice of triumph" (Psalm 47:1). We prayed for the Lord to open our spirits to hear the "sound of heaven" over Mount Carmel -- the rhythms, the melodies, and the textures that would launch the mighty weapons of the Word of God into the heavenlies, "to the intent that...the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10). We were being called to pierce the darkness with the light of truth, knowing that our struggle was "not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual hosts of wickedness" (Ephesians 6:12).

One after another, new songs were released to us, songs with a fresh sound, carrying powerful prophetic scriptures that the Lord was speaking to us. From week to week the living Word of God, the Lord of Hosts, was leading us forward in His triumphal procession (2 Corinthians 2:14).

In Chapter 6 of Ephesians on the subject of spiritual warfare, we are told "having done all, to stand." All of us in the body of Messiah have been called as worshippers to take this stand in the face of the enemy, in this fundamental fight of faith. "This is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith" (1 John 5:4). The primary battle in which we are engaged is a battle over faith. Worship is an act of faith that becomes an act of warfare. We must be a prophetic people who "see" the Lord high and lifted up (Isaiah 6:1), who "see" Him going before us, with the chariots of God thousands upon thousands (Psalm 68:7-12). Asaph, the Levitical choir director, was described as a "seer" (2 Chronicles 29:30). We must be able to say "I know in Whom I have believed." It is a powerful prophetic statement to say in the face of the horrors of suicide bombings faced almost daily in Israel, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good and His mercy endures forever."

In addition to being a weapon of spiritual warfare to change the atmosphere over our cities, corporate worship can lead us into deep times of intercession and travail for the people of our land. Many times as we enter the throne room of God in the midst of high praises we suddenly find ourselves touching the very burdens of His heart. We begin to cry out for the Lord to save His people, to have mercy, to remove the hindrances. "Go through, go through the gates, take out the stones, prepare the way for the people" (Isaiah 62:10). These times of corporate intercessory worship led by the Spirit of God clear the way for the lost to find their way to salvation.

Over the past several years we have seen a new openness in Israelis to the name of Yeshua, as the centuries-old reproach to His name is beginning to fall away. Last summer, as the terror attacks were increasing all over Israel, the Lord directed us to move our intercessory worship meetings outdoors to a public promenade with a spectacular view of Haifa. Every Monday evening we stood boldly lifting up the name of Yeshua in worship and praying for protection over our city. As the Spirit of the Lord descended on our gatherings, many Israelis were drawn to stop and listen. Several were deeply touched by His presence and later began attending our meetings. One by one

we see them being drawn up to the top of the mountain thirsting for living waters.

As we in the body of Messiah fulfil our role as a "royal priesthood, proclaiming the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9), the Lord intends that we will become His dwelling place (Ephesians 2:21). Psalm 22:3 says "God is enthroned [dwells] in the praises of His people." Where God's presence is there is healing, salvation, and deliverance. When the King of Glory comes in, He does what no man can do, to touch hearts and bring a true revelation of Himself.

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