



Prayer For Israel

News & Prayer Bulletin

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“What do you see, Jeremiah?”

Jer 1:11

THE ALMOND TREE AT THE BIBLICAL GARDEN OF YAD HASHMONA

The Biblical Garden, which is located at Yad Hashmona, the Messianic village near Jerusalem, speaks to many people through its symbolic images. Annually, both local Israelis and tourists from overseas come by hundreds to visit the Garden and to enjoy a biblical atmosphere. The trees, the stone terraces, the buildings and the archaeological remains revive the biblical message. Usually the tour-guides for the groups, consisting of both large teams as well as a few individuals, are members of the Moshav. An average tour around the place lasts for about an hour and a half. The Garden allows an easy visualisation of the biblical parables and a Hebraic interpretation of scriptural symbols.

Two arches, built of white Jerusalem stone, form the main entrances into the Garden. Near the eastern arch, among the different trees one can see also three flourishing almond trees. In the Judaeen Hills the almond trees grow naturally, and the early blossoming of their white flowers towards the end of the winter indicates that Spring is very near.

In the Hebrew language, both the almond tree and its fruit are called

SHAKED. In the book of Jeremiah, for example, the text reads as follows: “The word of the Lord came to me, saying: ‘Jeremiah, what do you see?’ and I said: I see a branch of an almond tree.’ Then the Lord said to me: ‘you have seen well, for I am ready to perform my word’ ” (1:11-12) [NKJV].

In the original Hebraic text there is a ‘play’ on words which immediately catches the attention of the person that knows the language. The noun *SHAKED* (almond) and the close verb *LISHKOD* (to be diligent; to watch over) stem from the same linguistic root (*Sh’k’d*). While the noun *SHAKED* denotes a seasonal fruit tree, giving fruit merely once a year, the associated verb *LISHKOD*, which means to stick to an aim, focuses on a permanent process, pointing to a faithful attitude, not just limited to a one-time episode.



Therefore, when one finds an almond tree or just reads about it, there exists a tangible reminder, through the figurative terminology of *sh'k'd*, about God's faithfulness and His careful diligence. In fact, also when one eats the fruit of the almond, it becomes a token of remembrance concerning God *the* trustworthy. Consequently, the prophet Jeremiah also made use of the same verb of *Sh'k'd* in connection with God's relationship to Israel, as follows: "And it shall come to pass, that as I have watched over [*Sh'k'd*] them to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so I will watch over [*Sh'k'd*] them to build and to plant, says the Lord" (31:28; 44:27). In other words, God is perfectly just and He knows best when to punish and when to reward.

Indeed, God takes good and fair care of His people Israel as well as of all those who trust Him. He is permanently wakeful, and is zealous to fulfil His promises to restore Israel, not only nationally in their ancient homeland but also spiritually. The Lord is vigilant [*Sh'k'd*] to perform His holy word. Thus, with the semantic uniqueness of Hebrew one can easily combine the noun and the verb around the almond tree into a symbolic teaching.

Additionally, in the Hebrew New Testament (the Delitzsch version)

one finds a variety of forms around the same verb *Sh'k'd*. To mention only the teachings of Yeshua, the verb *Sh'k'd* appears within more than a dozen verses, mostly in an imperative form, namely, challenging the believer "to watch!" Thus, the Lord commands us to live diligently [*Sh'k'd*] holy lives, and to be prepared before His return. Through the same verb of *Sh'k'd* the disciples of Yeshua are told to "Watch, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matt. 24: 42; 25: 13), and further on, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation" (Mark 14: 38). In other words, the almond tree and its fruit promote the thinking, and the talking, about the Lord's commandment to all to stay awake and to be prepared both spiritually and physically. The believer must always remain on the alert because the time is very short.

In summary, the flora at the Biblical Garden of Yad Hashmona provides a bridge, both real and symbolic, between our generation and the metaphoric richness of the Word of God. Indeed, the entire content of the Garden is a teaching instrument to witness about the truth.

A New Vision

Please join us in prayer for our vision to establish at Yad Hashmona a unique *museum* on the Messianic Jewish movement.

We believe that this project has a great potential to become a useful study/teaching tool for both Israelis and others. We need much wisdom and guidance from our Father in Heaven to bring this vision into reality according to His will.

Gershon Nerel

Gershon Nerel gained a PhD from the Hebrew University for research on modern Jewish believers in Yeshua. He has held positions with the Messianic Jewish Alliance. With his wife Sara, he revised the Franz Delitzsch Hebrew translation of the New Testament (2003). Since 1993 he has been chairman of the

*local management committee of the Ebenezer Home for Elderly Believers (located in Haifa). Currently he is initiating a **Messianic Museum (Heritage and Restoration Centre)**, planned for Yad Hashmona.*



END TIMES MADE SIMPLE

Who teaches What, and What does Scripture say about the Antichrist?

Keith Parker concludes his series of articles on the End Times. In his previous article, the writer has referred to the four main schools of biblical interpretation concerning the Antichrist, and referred to the teaching of the Apostle John and the Apostle Paul.

Jerome, the Bible translator, says, *“If St Paul had written openly and boldly ‘that the man of sin would not come’ until the Roman Empire was destroyed, a just cause of persecution would then appear to have been afforded against the Church in her infancy”.*

Tertullian, the writer and apologist, said plainly concerning this ‘hindrance’ to the man of sin’s appearing: *“Quis nisi Romanus status?”* – *“What is this but the Roman state?”* Tertullian said that Christians should pray for the continuance of the Roman Empire, *“because some terrible violence would ensue on its removal”.*

Irenæus, the Bishop of Lyons, who lived only one generation removed from the apostles, in 150 AD affirms that Paul is speaking of what would take place at the dismemberment of the Roman Empire. He taught concerning the beasts in Daniel 7 that the last beast was the Roman