

# The 5 R's of Church Revitalization

20 Tevet 5784, B"H

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## The Need for Church Revitalization & Revival

Many churches today are in great need of spiritual revitalization.

Extensive programming, elegant building layouts, and cinematic lighting will never bring revival to the church.

Some churches have become like the Church at Sardis, spoken of in the book of [Revelation](#):

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,  
'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:  
"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

Revelation 3:1

["And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead." Revelation 3:1 \(NKJV\) \(emphasis added\)](#)

Is there hope for a church like this?

Can a church that believes it is alive, but is actually dead, experience spiritual renewal, revival, and revitalization?

The answer is: yes!

There is **always** hope in Jesus our Messiah!

Let's examine some ways that established assemblies of believers can experience true church revitalization.

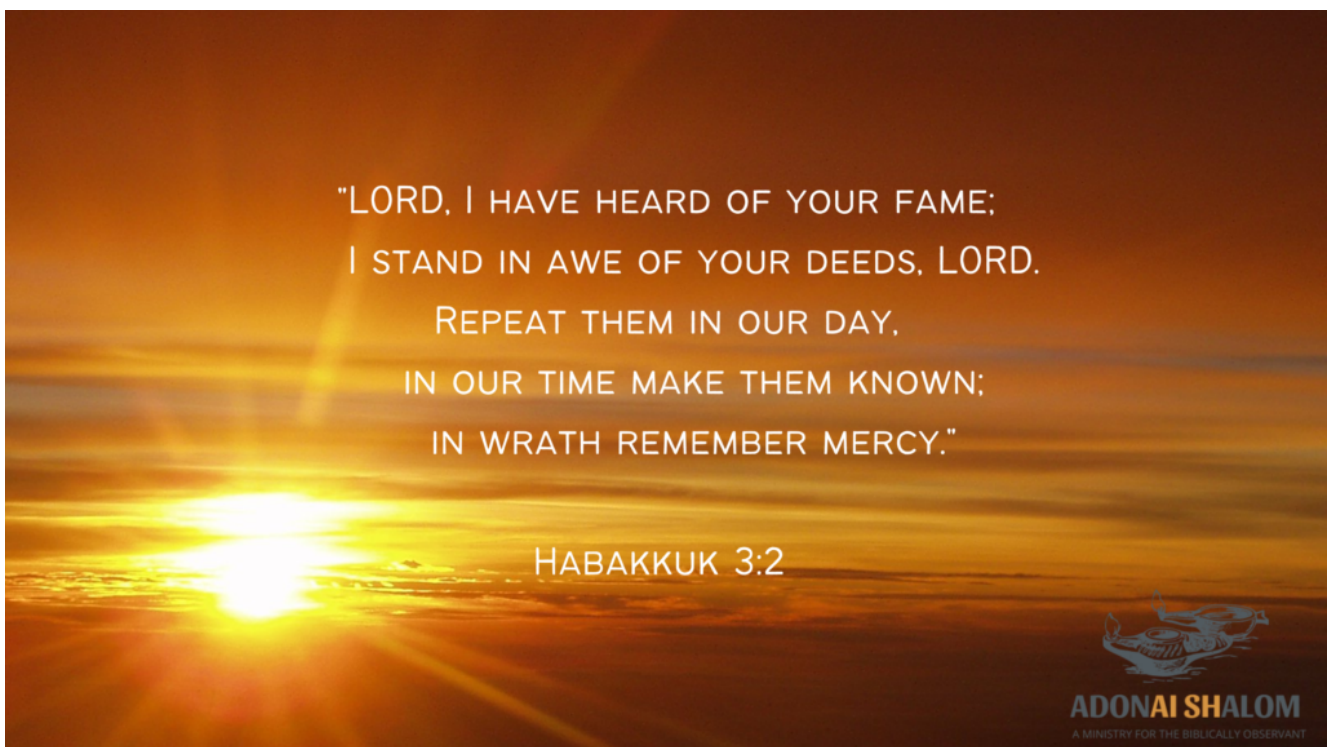
## 1. Revival Requires Repentance

Revival requires repentance – hungering hearts who long for a true, personal, and meaningful relationship with the Creator – with our Father who loves us and gave His Son to die on the cross for our sins.

I like the translation found in the NIV version of [Habakkuk 3:2](#). Here, the Prophet Habakkuk expresses a longing for revival:

"LORD, I have heard of your fame;  
I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD.  
Repeat them in our day,  
in our time make them known;  
in wrath remember mercy."

[Habakkuk 3:2 \(NIV\)](#)



If a church genuinely wants to experience growth and a spiritual (and often, numerical!) turnaround, that entire congregation needs to get on its knees.

Remember all that God has done in the past! Give thanks for the history of that church!

I always remind church leaders that they must be cautious to entrust the future of their church to God's Almighty plan, not to their own personal plans.

If we are sincere in our prayers that God will repeat in our

day His awesome deeds, we must be willing to do things the way He leads us, not our own ways. When we are willing to obey Him and follow His leadership, we can experience a dramatic turnaround leading to noticeable church revitalization.

## **2. Revitalization is Restorative**

Consider the etymology of the term, “revitalization.”

See the “vital” in there.

Have you checked your spiritual vitals? How is your spiritual pulse doing? Is your church or spiritual life’s heartbeat strong and life-giving?

To “re-vitalize” is “to give new life to” something again. Revitalization is life-giving.

Too many churches have settled in with their routine or their membership numbers. They are content because they make their budget every week, but is there truly “life?”

Life reproduces life. A healthy, life-giving church is full of people who have hearts for evangelism – reaching out to others in their community with the Gospel. Church revitalization occurs when a healthy church begins to see visitor numbers increase and overall enthusiasm increases among the church membership. This is very restorative and provides new hope across generations.

## **3. Recognition of what remains**

Some churches will be beyond repair, in a sense.

Sometimes years of poor leadership, bad financial decisions, or a local crisis can cause a church to make the difficult decision to close its doors.

It can be quite the challenge to experience true church



revitalization in a church that has become overly comfortable or unwilling to accept change. Nonetheless, restoration should always be the initial goal, with the acknowledgement/recognition that churches are imperfect human institutions that are not always ultimately viable despite our best efforts.

**There are times when planting a new church altogether is a much better option.**

The freshness of a new, exciting work led by the Holy Spirit can draw many new souls into a saving relationship with the LORD. Church planting can revitalize a community. If your church leadership is unsure whether or not to work toward church revitalization or scrap it and support the planting of a new church instead, there are church consultants who can help you discern some next steps.

Sometimes it seems we give up too soon on some of the established congregations. Seeking revival and revitalization in an already established church can also bring greater vitality to the surrounding community. However, this requires a great deal of patience and prayer so that the leadership as a whole will be open to the changes necessary to get back on track with outreach and ministry.

[“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” Galatians 6:9](#)



"And let us not grow weary while doing good,  
for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

GALATIANS 6:9

Working toward church revitalization is a process that requires patience and endurance.

## A closer look at the Church in Sardis

Consider the passage from [Revelation 3:1-6](#):

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I

[will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' Revelation 3:1-6](#)

The command here is to ["be watchful" \(v.2\).](#)

## Observation and Caring Analysis

Sometimes the first step is to simply observe what is going on in a congregation that needs revival. What has caused the lackluster feeling that seems to abound? Did the congregation abandon key components of a healthy doctrine? Did a tragedy occur that damaged the health of the church or community?

Be watchful, in love.

Check out the next part of that same verse. ["Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die..." \(Rev.3:2\).](#)



"Strengthen what remains."

The Word of God doesn't say, "abandon the things which remain" nor does it say "quit now."

But the Word of God does acknowledge the life-cycle. That

certain things are “ready to die.”

Maybe a devotion to certain carpet colors needs to die.

Maybe an obsession with certain music styles needs to die.

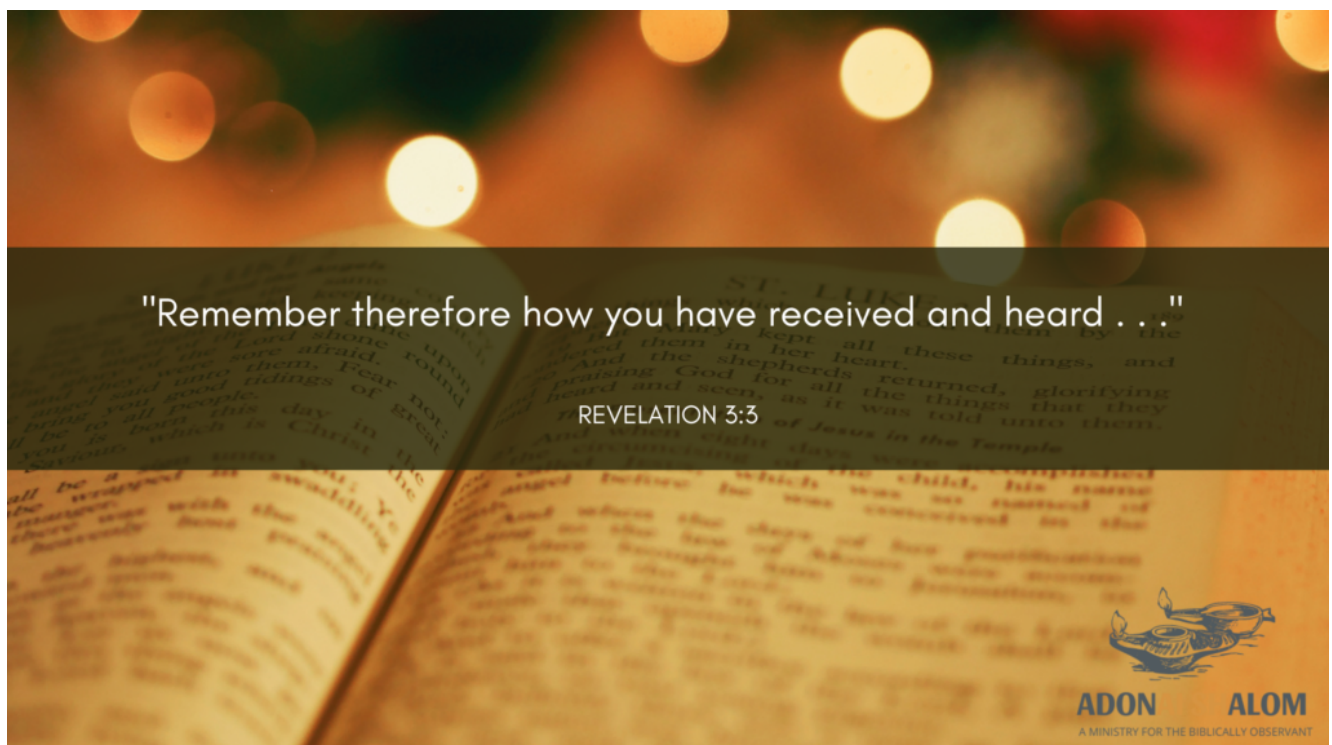
Maybe an overall mindset within the church that is hindering the work also needs to die.

## Strengthening what remains

Strengthen what remains – make sure there is sound doctrine being preached and love being demonstrated. Make sure that what remains is so very strengthened that it has the capacity to receive newcomers and reach out to the community to invite them into the church.

[“Remember therefore how you have received and heard . . .”](#)

[Revelation 3:3](#)



In order for a ministry to feel refreshed and truly become resurrected, that ministry needs to be standing on the firm foundation of the Word of God. Any deviation from that, and it will fall (and, in that case, probably should because any



disinterest in sound doctrine is disinterest in remaining a truly Biblical work). Slick marketing campaigns can't save a church, but God's Word sure can.

## Doctrinal soundness and purpose

Remember therefore, how you have received and heard. The congregation must be reminded of all that is their legacy. They have received the inheritance of the Gospel and must once again find purpose in that. Intentional church revitalization is not only possible, but it is something that should be sought.

## Reminder: repentance is key

["Hold fast and repent." Revelation 3:3](#)



See, there it is. Repentance really is key. In a declining church, something happened at some point that caused the downward turn. Without repentance and a renewed vision, the work cannot be restored. But with repentance and obedience to God's will and way, church revitalization is absolutely possible.



## 4. Reassurance for the Remnant

["You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." Revelation 3:4-5](#)

There often remains a remnant of faithful believers who find themselves attending a struggling church. These brothers and sisters in the LORD are charged with praying for church revitalization and remaining faithful wherever God has them.

[God's Word](#) is ever filled with comforting reassurances for those who are truly a part of the remnant:

["They shall walk with Me in white." Revelation 3:4](#)



We shall walk with Jesus! Wearing white – blameless, for those who love the LORD have been declared worthy ([Rev.3:4](#)). Jesus (Yeshua) says that those who have been deemed faithful will not be blotted out from the Book of Life and He will confess our names before His Father and His angels ([Rev.3:5](#)).

Church leaders responsible to help an assembly in need of church revitalization should identify the true remnant in that place who have persisted faithfully. Establish consistent prayer meetings and pursue God for help in increasing the spiritual vitality of that local church body.

## **Signs of church revitalization**

A church that is beginning to experience church revitalization will begin to reflect greater love toward one another and neighbors. It is important to pray against the spirit of spiritual apathy. A church that is making a positive turnaround will begin to truly love the community around them. You will notice greater warmth among the believers and heightened enthusiasm.

A healthy church is also multigenerational. If a church has become stagnant, this is often related to a lack of age diversity among the regular attendees. A sign that a church is experiencing revival or revitalization is the presence of many generations, worshipping together in unity. A vibrant church experiencing revival will naturally reach out to the wider community around them.

Churches experiencing revitalization will naturally grow. People will be attracted to the presence of the Spirit of the LORD among the people.

If your church is in need of restoration and revitalization, please let us know so we can be praying for you! Pray for the leaders involved with plans to revitalize ministries – for steadfastness and wisdom! It is exciting to walk with the LORD, and so rewarding as we see churches revitalized and restored!

But always remember – it is not we ourselves who can make these changes – we need the LORD who touches hearts and brings about the healing and restoration our churches need!

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# Hidden on purpose, for a purpose: Yokheved's son, Moses

[Parashat Shemot Exodus 1-6:1](#)

[Exodus \(Shemot\) 2](#) introduces us to Amram אֲמֵרָם and Yokheved יֹכֶבֶד (commonly rendered *Jochebed* in English).

It is important to note that their names are not revealed in Exodus 2. We don't find out their names until a genealogy reports their names in Exodus 6:20.

## Amram & Yokheved, of the tribe of Levi

What is revealed in Exodus 2 is this special couple's *status* alone. They are of the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe. Scripture tells us a daughter of Levi is married to a son of Levi and they have a son.

Amram's name in Hebrew means "Exalted Nation." Yokheved's name means "YHWH is Glory." Their son would be a deliverer through whom the holy nation would indeed be exalted and the LORD's Glory made known.

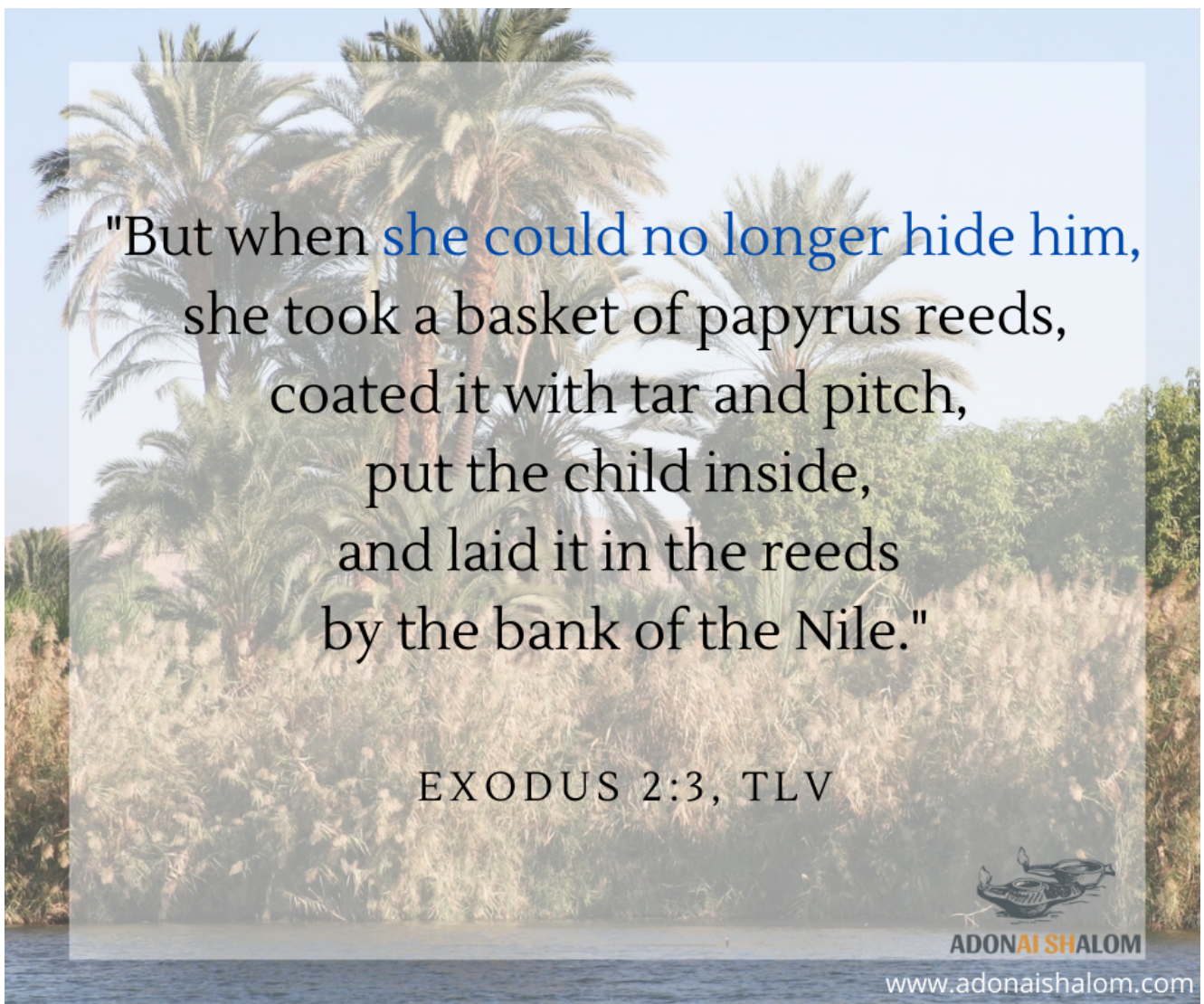
If we do not spend time in study of the Scriptures, we would not realize the richness hidden there. These two Levites in Exodus 2 appear nameless and nondescript, yet look how instrumental they were in Adonai's plan!

[Proverbs 25:2 "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter and](#)

[the glory of kings to search it out.](#)

As mentioned above, Yokheved had a son. Scripture describes the baby boy as “delightful!” The situation in Egypt was horrifically oppressive at that time, so due to the danger, Yokheved hid her son. She managed to hide the child for 3 months.

[Ex.2:3 “But when she could no longer hide him, she took a basket of papyrus reeds, coated it with tar and pitch, put the child inside, and laid it in the reeds by the bank of the Nile.”](#)



Yokheved was a wonderful mother. She did what she could to protect her baby and trusted in the LORD G-D of Israel as she placed the basket upon the Nile’s waters. And protect him, He did, for this would be no ordinary child: floating in that



basket was Moses (Moshe), the one who would lead Israel out of Egypt.

The LORD uses the simplest of vessels – from a basket to a manger – to demonstrate to the world that His power is made perfect in raising up the lowly.



The LORD uses the simplest of vessels – from a basket to a manger – to demonstrate to the world that His power is made perfect in raising up the lowly.

Truly, all that our Heavenly Father has done is marvelous, and always exceedingly above any expectation or level of understanding. He created you, and He did so with a purpose.



# What is hidden within you?

What is it that you are hiding within you? Has the LORD placed a burden or a talent or a calling deep within you? If you pray and prepare, the time will come when your gift will no longer be able to be hidden!



"A man's gift makes room for him, and leads him before great men." Proverbs 18:16

[Proverbs 18:16 "A man's gift makes room for him, and leads him before great men."](http://www.adonaihalom.com)

Though Moshe stuttered, the anointing upon his life made room for him even in the presence of the highest authority in the land, and Pharaoh had to cave in and let the people of Israel go. It was a temporary deliverance, but many years later, the

Greater Deliverer would come.

And though there was no room in the Bethlehem inn, the Anointed One's presence alone caused room to be made in the hearts of those who would seek and follow Him. When Messiah Yeshua (Jesus the Christ) came to this world, born in that lowly and humble setting, few understood He was the One who would reign eternally.

## **Revelation requires an element of hiddenness**

Revelation is a key component of Scripture. In order for something to be revealed, it would have to first be hidden. It is a Scriptural principle, and Yeshua taught us:

[Mark 4:22 "For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, nor anything kept secret except that it would come to light."](#)

There is a time and season for all things, and many of those things that were previously unknown or hidden to us have now come to light. Will you faithfully follow the One who has been revealed as Messiah of Israel, the Lamb who was slain, the Savior of all those who would believe, the King of all kings? Will you allow Him to use you, to shield you and to lift you up to impact the nations with the Good News of Messiah Yeshua (Jesus)?

How will you, like Yokheved, trust in the process and witness the LORD's greatness revealed?

Moshe was of Levitical lineage, which was crucial to the unfolding of Biblical prophecies. If you have come to believe in Messiah Yeshua and have trusted Him with your salvation, you are of royal lineage, too.

[1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,](#)

[a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."](#)

## **Moses was hidden on purpose, for a purpose.**

The LORD used him to [lead the Israelites out of Egypt!](#)

He made a way where there seemed to be no way, and He can do the same in your life, too.

<https://adonaishalom.com/index.php/2022/01/16/escaping-egypt-p-arashat-bshalach/>

May the LORD use you mightily and bless you on your journey!



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## **What will be written on the gates in New Jerusalem?**

### **What will New Jerusalem look like?**

One day, the Holy City, a.k.a. the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven. *Voilà!* All things made new!

John, the author of Revelation, describes this:

Jerusalem will have the **glory** of God ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Jerusalem will be like a radiant precious stone like [REDACTED] ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Jerusalem will be [REDACTED] like crystal ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Will it have the famed “streets of **gold**?” Of course! *You can find that in [Revelation 21:21](#).*

Jerusalem will also have a **great, high wall** made of [REDACTED] around it ([Rev.21:12, 14](#)) with **12 gates** and **12 angels** above the gates. The Holy City will be laid out as a square shape ([Rev.21:16](#)) and is made of pure **gold**, “clear as glass” ([Rev.21:18](#)). Besides the gates, the city wall will have 12 foundations. On each of those will be written the names of the 12 apostles/emissaries of Yeshua (Jesus).

These believers made a huge evangelical impact on the world during their lifetimes and history shall never forgotten their contribution.

The foundations of the city wall will reflect the beauty of their devotion, for in order, the foundations will be made of [REDACTED], **sapphire**, [REDACTED], **emerald**, **sardonyx**, **carnelian**, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], **jacinth**, and [REDACTED] ([Rev.21:19-20](#)).

But history has more-than-occasionally forgotten the contribution of some very important others. Which leads to this question:

## What is so special about the gates?

The gates are 12 pearls, *dare I say, of great price* – each gate from a single [REDACTED] ([Rev.21:21](#)). There are 3 gates per cardinal direction: north, south, east, west ([Rev.21:13](#)).





**Each gate will be inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel ([Rev. 21:12](#)).**

Wait? Doesn't traditional Christianity say that the 12 tribes have been basically replaced by the 12 apostles?

Doesn't mainstream theology teach that the "New" Testament is far more relevant to us today than the contents of the "Old"?

Isn't it taught in most seminaries that the "Church" has replaced the Jews as the chosen people?

Sadly, the answer is, "yes" . . . despite the flawed theology.

Supersessionism is (*lamentably*) alive and well. Antisemitism flourishes due to these types of errant doctrines.

Will the gates be etched with the names of Israel's tribes as though it were some type of politically correct memorial to days gone by?



Or is there a greater meaning here?

## **The God of the Bible is the God of ISRAEL**

**An honest hermeneutic (interpretation) must allow Scripture to speak, not impose an agenda on the Biblical text.**

We must ask questions. What is Scripture saying to us? What is it that the Eternal One wants us to glean?

**How have we injected our own biases into the text?**

Are we reading from a posture of humility or from the lens of an entitlement culture?

**Do we recognize that the God of the Bible is the God of *Israel*?**

## **In regards to those 12 gates, we can ask a very simple question:**

**What is the function of a gate?** Does it not “allow for”, or “inhibit” as the case may be, an entrance?

*Would the church even have a prayer if it were not for God's chosen people and the revelation of God entrusted to them?*

*Could the church even know a Savior if it were not for the prophetic words of the Hebrew Scriptures?*

The gates allow for all to come in who have accepted and love our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus!).

**The names of the 12 tribes of *B'nei-Yisrael*, the house of Israel, will be forever etched on the eternal gates.**

No longer shall their names be diminished, forgotten, or

tossed aside.

Their heads shall be lifted up in redemption.

We must pray for Israel, for those who do not yet know that Messiah has come!

*Lift up your heads, O gates,  
and be lifted up, you everlasting doors:  
that the King of glory may come in.*

*“Who is this King of glory?”*

*ADONAI strong and mighty,*

*ADONAI mighty in battle!*

*Lift up your heads, O gates,  
and lift them up, you everlasting doors:  
that the King of glory may come in.*

*“Who is this King of glory?”*

*ADONAI-TZVA’OT—He is the King of glory! Selah*

*Psalm 24:7-10 TLV (emphasis added)*

**The foundations of the wall are bound by the apostolic witness of the first believers**, who themselves kept the very Jewish (and of course, Biblical) practices of keeping the Sabbath day holy, participating in the *moedim* (Biblical feast days), and honoring the **entirety of the Scriptures** available to them which at that time included most prominently the *Torah*.

The first believers, Jew and Gentile alike, had joined themselves to a *Jewish* movement founded by a Jewish Rabbi who also happens to be the Messiah – the Promised One, Yeshua haMashiach (Jesus the Christ), who came to save all of Israel, both the native born Israeli and the grafted in.

**We must re-evaluate our**

# relationship to Israel

Yesterday was Holocaust Remembrance Day. It coincided this year with Tu B'Shevat, a tree planting day in Israel.

For too much of history, the church as a whole has held a very poor witness toward the Jewish people.

Some orthodox Jewish rabbis have concluded that the Holocaust was a judgment of *Christians* – demonstrating that the Christian Gospel fails the Jew due to the church's inaction and willingness to look the other way as Jewish lives were lost to Hitler's evil monstrosities.

**Even today, many Christians seem indifferent to the Jewish homeland despite the miracle that is modern day Israel.**

We are living in a time when prophecies are constantly being fulfilled and the favor of Adonai continues to rest upon His people, Israel.

As believers, we must take up the task of a course correction!

We need to re-evaluate our frame of reference and **pastors must commit to preaching *accurately* from the entirety of Scripture.**

The enemy, *ha-satan*, has worked diligently to sow confusion among believers and has been successful.

Many believers today are **incredibly distanced** from the Truth, and don't realize it. It is no coincidence that the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath Day observance to Sundays, that new liturgical seasons were invented, and the Biblical feast days were **abandoned** in favor of manmade celebrations that focus on egg-laying rabbits and decorated evergreen trees. All of these **distractions** have lured the church as a whole away from the very Gospel we want to share!

Even Bible Studies tend to focus on what the apostles

achieved, and would likely highlight their place in the New Jerusalem, but so many gloss right over the fact that **united within the design of the city wall will also be the heritage of the twelve tribes of Israel.**

## **The New Jerusalem shows us the continuity from Old to New Testament.**

All of the confusion that the devil has sown will be forever defeated. Continuity, unity, and justice will all be restored.

The gates of the enemy shall be forever torn down and the New Jerusalem gates will gleam in all their glorified splendor. Won't it be amazing?!

## **Hope for Israel**

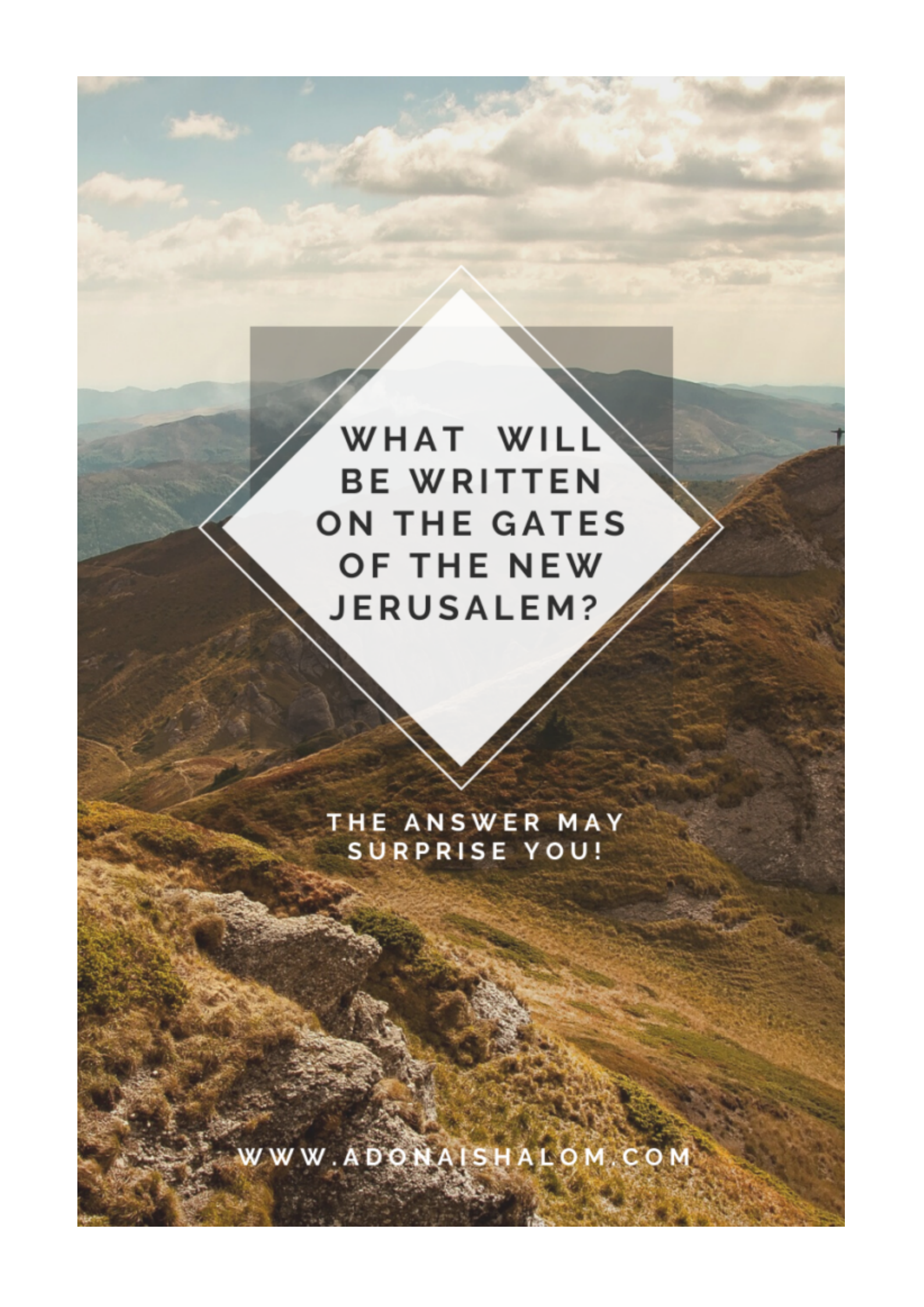
*Lift up your heads, O gates!*

*For the King of Glory shall come in, shall restore all things, and His people shall forever live together with the Lord Most High in the New Jerusalem!*

The New Jerusalem will be a beautiful place! Whenever you feel discouraged, remember one day all things will be made new!

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