

# Gibraltar to Jerusalem Prayer Journey and the Isaiah Highway . . .



**Photo Collage:** Ben Gray and team of prayer warriors interceding for Syria from the Golan Heights in Northern Israel – Gibraltar to Jerusalem Prayer Journey.

Australia's best warriors fought in North Africa to push back the dark forces of Nazi Fascism. 70+ years ago, the ANZACs (Australian New Zealand Army Corps) played a central role in the strategic Battle of El Alamein. After 3 long years of successive Allied defeats it looked inevitable that Hitler would break through the last defendable lines, seize Jerusalem and complete his 'final solution' to eliminate the Jews. Little known to many, prayer warriors Derek Prince and Rees Howells were also in action. They understood the spiritual nature of this battle, and the fight they were waging, was not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities. Derek Prince was actually there as a medical orderly and Rees Howells roused his bible college in Wales to fervent persistent prayer. Both later recounted their roles in their respective books *Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting* and *Rees Howells Intercessor*. The Battle of El Alamein was a turning point, it being the first Allied victory of the Second World War. Prayer can change history.

In September – October 2013 I led a team of 44 people on a strategic prayer journey to Jerusalem and the nation of Israel to complete the final leg of what was called the, 'Un-Lock North Africa' mandate, that was about establishing a highway in prayer for healing, reconciliation and kingdom breakthrough,

from Gibraltar to Jerusalem. It was seeing the Middle East through fresh eyes in a desire to engage in prayer for the peace envisioned by the prophet Isaiah.

***In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."***

Isaiah 19:23-25 (NIV)

However let me begin at the beginning of this incredible story and then you will grasp the uniqueness of this kingdom campaign. While leading a strategic prayer journey in Spain in 2004, I was led by the Holy Spirit to make a detour to Gibraltar. Looking out across the Strait one evening I saw lights twinkling in the distance. I said to myself, 'that must be Morocco.' Immediately the Lord spoke to me these words, "You'll go there one day." With that prompt in mind I took a team on an

exploratory mission exposure tour in 2005 after completing a prayer journey in Rome.

Within hours of landing, as I was travelling along the highway to the ancient Moroccan city of Fes, out of nowhere, God gave me the scripture, Isaiah 62:10, along with the following statement, I want you to return and, *“unlock the ancient doors and re-build the highway of righteousness from Gibraltar to Jerusalem.”* Along with the above God gave two other key words. One was to do with our Australian identification with the land and its people through both World Wars – we came alongside to liberate, and the other was, as we had never been a colonising power in the region, the enemy could not use this as a means to subvert His cause through us and that we would be welcomed into every nation we visited. As they say, the rest is history, experiencing firsthand God’s favour as we visited each nation across this vast region.

In my 30 years involvement with strategic intercession globally, God has confirmed to us in the natural what He is seeking to do in the spiritual. This is not unusual nor is it inconsistent with scriptures like Romans 1:20... *“Where since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen. Being understood from what has been made...”* (NIV). In 2008 God confirmed His word through a headline and an article in a national construction magazine that read, ‘The World’s Largest Highway Project...’ Guess where? It was being built across North Africa (commencement date was...2007), with a feasibility study underway on a tunnel under the Straits of Gibraltar connecting Europe to the African continent. This gave us the sign in the earth realm that things had definitely entered a new phase in the heavenlies across North Africa and the Middle East region.

This was the genesis of the ‘Un-Lock North Africa’ strategic prayer campaign that has now seen Australian teams (with one or two people from NZ, USA and UK) visit all five nations of North Africa, including three Mediterranean

Gateway nations and Israel. From 2007 to 2013 we have prayed our way through Morocco, Gibraltar, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Malta, Istanbul, Algeria and Israel, meeting our brothers and sisters in Christ along the way. God specifically revealed to us to include in our assignment the three spiritual gateways that exist across the Mediterranean region. They are Gibraltar in the West Western Gate), Malta in the central Mediterranean (Central or Northern Gate) and Istanbul – Turkey in the East (Eastern Gate).

Many were surprised in 2011 when tiny Tunisia ignited a desire among Arab youth for justice and good government. As the fires of protest took hold, strongmen dictators have been cast down. In 2009 the Lord spoke to the team declaring that, “Tunisia would be the ‘thin-end of the wedge’,” that this tiny nation would open up North Africa. Words of a similar nature relating to places like Egypt and Libya were also given as we travelled to these nations. Those who are able to read the signs of the times, need to look beyond world media headlines and the shrill of social commentary to ask God what He is doing, especially in the region on North Africa and the Middle East.

One of the first things I did in preparation for



*Ben standing on top of the rampart of a fortress near Central Tunis - Sept 2009 - declaring change is coming & declaring a time of breakthrough across North Africa.*

our campaign was to form a Strategic Research Unit (SRU). This small and dedicated research band has become key to building explicit

national profiling on our target nation by gathering information around areas such as; demographics, culture, religion, history – both ancient and modern, along with specific spiritual revelation. From this collective information we seek to develop our ‘meta-narrative’ on a nation. This enables our prayer teams on the ground to be guided by the best intelligence we can offer. Those of us who are



*Arch of Aurelius Tripoli Libya 2010, one of the many gates on the old Roman road - the East/West road between Alexandria and Carthage - Tunis.*

interceding for, and working with the people of this region, need to keep our focus firmly on God and His love for the people who live in these nations. He loves them with a passion and wants only the best for them and their future. So, whichever way the affairs of men



*Jonathan Gould leading the team in prayer at a site in Israel on our Gibraltar to Jerusalem Prayer Journey. He's highlighting our Gibraltar to Jerusalem banner.*

take North Africa and the wider region of the Middle East, it is certain that increasing spiritual hunger will be running neck and neck with the spreading emotion, rage and demands for political freedom and change. Therefore, however the ‘ancient doors’ swing open, the Church of Jesus Christ must to be ready to ‘seize the day’ and walk through them.

Let's now consider an idea that many are speaking about these days, the Isaiah Highway. Here we will look more closely at Isaiah's prophetic word in chapter 19:23-25 concerning a ‘righteous, worshipping highway’, one that God seeks to build between the families of Isaac and Ishmael, and the sons of Keturah.

So far in this article, I've been speaking about the Gibraltar to Jerusalem Prayer Journey in particular and suggested that something monumental has been taking shape across North Africa and the Middle East: something historic. However for most reading this article, this is happening thousands of kilometres away from the safety of our shores, so where does it leave us as the Church in Australia and the West in general?

### ***How do we as concerned Christians respond?***

Is God clearly answering the prayers of the saints, unseating principalities and tearing down strongholds? Are we witnessing a shift that will usher in the ultimate fulfilment of Isaiah's prophetic word written in chapter 19:23-25 concerning a ‘righteous worshipping highway’, one that God seeks to build between the families of Isaac, Ishmael and the sons of Keturah? Is His answer to bless, through this ‘Isaiah Companionship’, all the families of the earth emerging within this chaos of change?

As I, and a number of others, began working in harmony with God's prophetic agenda for this region, this state of ‘Abrahamic blessedness’ – this end-time companionship of Isaiah 19, became a mind-blowing revelation to us. That God, in His infinite wisdom, had chosen as part of His divine end-time purpose, to bless all peoples...the entire earth, through the coming

together of the three generational lines of Abraham's household; this Isaiah Companionship. From my reading of this passage and others, it is God's divine strategy

for them to be joined by a special highway: a highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8). This 'tri-



Ben Gray, speaking at one of our annual pastors & leaders conference at a desert Prayer Centre in ... Egypt.

national' (Egypt, Assyria and Israel) end-time prophetic revelation spoken of by Isaiah is yet to be fulfilled. It may yet come as a result of more upheaval, internal division and conflict or through all-out war. Verses 16, 17 and 22 of Isaiah 19 says that the Lord's hand will be raised against Egypt, He will strike her, but for a time, and they will respond to Him and then He we will heal her; knowledge and worship will flow freely into the heart of Egypt and beyond its borders. Now, whatever way this is ushered in, we can be assured, *'there will be an altar set up in the heart of Egypt...'* (v. 19) and this will be a place where the *'Isaiah Companionship'* will gather together in worship of Jesus, the Son of the most-high God! With the current turmoil and tensions occurring across this region, including the long-time tensions between Jews, Muslims and Christians, it is vitally important that as Christians, we keep our focus on heaven's agenda, God's prophetic purpose – to bless all of Abraham's offspring; natural and spiritual.

God is, what you might term, a great multi-

tasker! In that, as He's returning the Jewish people from the four corners of the earth to their ancient land, He's also preparing His Bride, His Church in the nations. As Christians we long for a spiritual return to the Lord and the true face of His salvation for all peoples. Could it be in God's plan that our finest hour will be when Israel is restored nationally and spiritually to the Lord at the Second Coming of Christ? It would be ever so easy to develop a kind of spiritual short sightedness in this hour, and not recognise the wider implications of a nation being (re) born in a day as predicted in Isaiah 66:7-8 on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1948.

*"It's time! – Time for genuine spiritual and societal transformation to take place. Now is our time to stand with our brothers and sisters within this region."*

As the worldwide Church, it is not a time to bury our head in the sand or to shrink from this miraculous reality as though our own interests will be overshadowed if we somehow recognise or agree with these developments. Neither do we have to alter our *'Christo-centric'* theology in order to accommodate such a position. It's time to see this from our *'Isaiah*



A special leaders gathering in Jerusalem from across the Isaiah 19 Highway ... at the Crossroads conference 2016

Companionship' perspective and rejoice with them as they search for the true Messiah, along with the rest of Abraham's household.

This *'Isaiah Companionship'* is becoming a

reality in a number of ways. Since 2014 we've been joining other on-the-ground ministries from across the region. Brothers and sisters in Christ committed to seeing this Isaiah Highway become a reality. We meet in Jerusalem and

Ben addressing a gathering of leaders from across the Middle East ... 2016 in Jerusalem.



other Middle East locations in the context of prayer, worship, testimony and exhortation. Our gatherings are framed around the prophetic revelation of Isaiah 19:23-35. The above photo is from one of our sweet times of worship where the Lord's presence was

most tangible as we worshiped in multiple languages together, singing freely in Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, Farsi, Kurdish, Armenian and English.

It's time! – Time for genuine spiritual and societal transformation to take place. Now is our time to stand with our brothers and sisters within this region. On the ground this is an incredibly unstable and difficult region in which to live, yet our confidence and hope is not in the politics of the moment nor our worldly systems. We have the certainty of God's Word that, *"...through the church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to His eternal purpose."* (Ephesians 3:10 NIV) It's here that we need to rest our confidence. The unshakable kingdom of Hebrews chapter 12, verse 28.

A key nation in seeing this 'Isaiah Companionship' become a reality is the nation of Egypt. There are approximately 12 to 15 million Christians in Egypt – 90% are Coptic and 10% are mostly Evangelical. You may be unaware of this, that approximately 47% of all

Christians who live in the Middle East live in Egypt! God has kept alive through centuries of hardship, trial and persecution, the seed of the Gospel in the heart of this nation for 'such a time as this'. Unless we understand the spiritual connotations of what is taking place within the spiritual realm over this region and the strategic implications that connect with it, we will completely misunderstand what God is doing. Into this mix we need to add the changing face of Islam that's emerging across the region. As I travel in these parts, I increasingly hear testimonies of how Muslims are coming to Christ through personal contact with loving followers of Jesus, amazing answers to prayer, supernatural healing's and sovereign encounter's with Jesus. As part of my commitment to this, Isaiah revelation, we have at the request of the Egyptian church, taken teams of Australian pastors to run annual pastors and leaders conference for 700+ leaders; 2016 was our eighth year.

*"With the current turmoil and tensions occurring across this region, including the long-time tensions between Jews, Muslims and Christians, it is vitally important that as Christians, we keep our focus on heaven's agenda ..."*

As part of this growing kingdom awareness and my commitment in seeing God's divine purpose come-to-pass according to Isaiah 19 and 62:10 ... *"Pass through ... prepare the way ... build up the highway..."* We continue to led strategic prayer teams along this prophetic Highway of worship and righteousness. Into a number of regions like, Armenia and South East Turkey, the ancient lands of the Assyrian empire and the region of Haran; Abraham's territory. We have helped establish a network of prayer in the nation of Armenia.

Whatever your position concerning the events occurring across North Africa and the wider

Middle East Region, something monumental is happening; it's quite historic as well as prophetic. There is no doubt in my mind that



God is shaking the systems of this world and all of creation trying to get our attention. He's using a variety of factors, economic, ecological, environmental, wars and 'rumours of wars' as part of His strategic wake-up call. It is true, we are living in the end-times, even though we don't have a clear picture of the timing of Jesus Christ's return. He is however, revealing key warning signs for those who want to believe, concerning the times in which we live thereby enabling His followers to stay focused, prepared, on course and willing to occupy until He returns (Luke 19:13).

***From our perspective, God is clearly answering the prayers of the saints, ancient and modern.***

He's unseating principalities, tearing down strongholds, realigning ancient boundary lines, exposing greed, corruption and false messianic-like voices declaring peace where there is no peace. However, I want to declare that a genuine move of God will form out of the ashes of these confrontations. A great kingdom transformation is coming and it will encompass the descendants of Abraham's sons, from the deserts of Morocco in the West to the Mountains of Iran in the East, to the distant shores of Turkey in the North to the sands of Arabia in the South, a transformation that will impact every nation of the globe.

Now we who are in Christ must stay vigilant and ready. Prepared to do whatever the Lord asks of us in this day and time, regardless of where we are situated, even if it's thousands of kilometres from the epicentre of the main drama. Our prayer life needs to be, must be, connected to this prophetic agenda, for in its life and fulfilment lays our destiny as well. Therefore,

with the current turmoil and tensions occurring across North Africa and the Middle East, including the long-time tensions between Jews, Arabs and Christians, it is vitally important that as believers in Christ, we keep our focus on heaven's agenda, and God's prophetic purpose – to bless all of Abraham's offspring.

We are on the cusp; a shift is in place that may usher in Isaiah's prophetic word spoken of in chapter 19:23-25. This concerns a 'righteous highway' that God seeks to build between the



household of Isaac (son of Sarah) the household of Ishmael (son Hagar) and the households of Midian, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Ishback and Shuah (sons of Keturah). In reference to Keturah's sons: As I understand it, this move of God will have an impact on Assyria: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and other Middle Eastern territories. Because Keturah's children, according to Genesis 25:6, were scattered throughout these ancient lands of Assyria. Their identity maybe somewhat obscured because Abraham sent them eastward, none-the-less, they still have a rich identity and destiny as part of this promise.

To assist watchmen-intercessors from Australia connect with this reality, we now have in place an initiative that helps prepare people to better understand and rub shoulders with the 'living stones' called to work out this 'Isaiah Companionship'. This initiative is called, the APN International Watchmen Bootcamp, now held in Israel each year.

Ps Ben F. Gray Apostolic leader CHI-Ministries | Apostolic Oversight & Founder: Australian Prayer Network

Contact us at <[www.chiministries.com](http://www.chiministries.com)> and ask to receive our newsletter