

Session 13

Israel and the End Times

– Part 1: Israel's Role and Importance –

A. Introduction

1. We cannot fully understand the End Times without understanding the issue of Israel. Similarly, we cannot fully understand the issue of Israel without understanding the End Times.
 - a. Some have the idea that God's covenant with Israel has been abolished. However, God is not finished with Israel, and she plays a key and vital role in world redemption and especially in End-Time events.
2. In Romans 11:25, Paul was talking to a predominantly Gentile audience in the Church of Rome.
 - a. He had a tremendous pastoral burden for them as a people to understand the mystery of Israel;
 - b. Paul wanted to bring them into a new understanding of some dimensions of God's redemptive purposes, and this includes the nation of Israel;
 - c. He tells us that there is no option as God is not neutral about Israel;
 - d. Some may believe that God has replaced Israel with the Gentile church. However, Scripture is clear that His calling for her is irrevocable (Rom. 11:28–29).

B. Israel's Role in God's Redemption of Mankind

1. The Real Issue — God's Sovereign Election (Rom. 9:11)
 - a. The issue about Israel isn't actually about Israel! It is about God and His sovereign right to elect (choose) a people through whom He would reveal Himself.
 - b. This issue goes back to the Garden of Eden where God chose what tree Adam and Eve could not eat from, and demanded that man would honor His election. Man rebelled against this, and we are living the rest of history in the fallen world as a result.

- c. But God has a plan! God chose to confine Himself to a course of action on the earth, and that course of action was to bring Himself forth in the flesh through a woman. That woman would come from a specific lineage that God would elect. The whole of history from Adam through Christ, and even until now, is about God exercising His right to choose (Gen. 3:15).
2. Israel exists because God elected a gentile, pagan, idolatrous Chaldean (the region of modern-day Iraq) named Abram (Gen. 18:18).
 - a. God chose him, set him apart, changed his name to Abraham, and made a covenant with him. God did not choose Abraham because he was Jewish, or even righteous.
 - b. Instead, God chose a man through whom He would reveal Himself to the nations of the earth, and set that man apart to be the father of a new nation that was not a nation. God chose that salvation would come through Abraham.
3. God elected Isaac, and not Ishmael. God elected Jacob, and not Esau. It was not because of anything about the individuals, but it was about God choosing a lineage through which salvation would be made available to all who believe. There could only be one line, because Jesus was going to be human (Rom. 9:11).
4. Out of the nations of the earth, God called forth His very own nation. It was never about Israel but was always about God creating a context for Jesus to be born into and to bring salvation to the nations through. It was about God declaring Himself to the nations.
5. Israel was and will always be God's vehicle of salvation. There are eight core entrustments that God has given to Israel (Rom. 9:4–5):
 - a. The adoption (Ex. 4:22);
 - b. The glory (Ex. 19);
 - c. The covenants — Abrahamic, Davidic, New (Josh. 1, Jer. 31:31–34);
 - d. The giving of the Law (Ex. 20);
 - e. The service of God (temple ministry and the priesthood);
 - f. The promises (Isa. 60 – 66);

- g. The fathers and the patriarchs (the Old Testament);
 - h. The lineage through which Christ would come.
6. Many believe that the Gentile church is the new “spiritual Israel” and has replaced the actual nation of Israel (this is commonly referred to as “Replacement Theology”). However, this is not true.
- a. Jeremiah 31:31–38 is clear that God was going to make a New Covenant with Israel and not the Gentile church.
 - b. In Romans 11:17–25, Paul uses olive trees to represent the nation of Israel (the cultivated olive tree) and Gentile nations (wild olive trees).
 - i. Instead of completely uprooting the nation of Israel, the Gentiles are actually being “grafted into” the “root” by God. This “root” refers to Israel and refers to a remnant of Jewish people that God has preserved throughout the centuries who have believed in Jesus as their Messiah.
 - ii. Paul also prophesies that eventually, “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 10:1).
 - c. Paul emphasizes that Israel’s calling is irrevocable, and the Gentile church is not meant to replace her (Rom. 11:29).

C. The Significance of Israel in the End Times

1. The End Times is the final part of God’s restoration process and eternal plan for mankind, and the centrepiece of God’s eternal purpose is for Jesus to establish His Kingdom over all the earth as He joins the heavenly and earthly realms together (Eph. 1:9–10).
2. One of Israel’s main roles during the End Times is to invite the King of glory back to rule in Jerusalem and to reign over them (Matt. 23:37–39; Ps. 24:7–10; Lk. 19:11–28).
 - a. Jesus prophesied to the leaders of Israel in Matt. 23:39 saying, “...for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, *blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!*”

- b. Jesus will not rule Jerusalem until He is officially invited by the Jewish leadership to be their King.
 - c. Jesus will only come back to Jerusalem when Israel's leaders welcomes Him to rule and reign over them out of their own free will.
 - d. Only upon the covenant invitation of the leaders of Israel will Jesus establish Himself as King over Jerusalem and Israel. After that, He will branch out His government over all the nations (Isa. 2:1–4; Mic. 4:1–5; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 37:28; 43:4–7).
 - e. Satan understands this truth and therefore constantly seeks to exploit this “loophole” in God’s prophetic plan. His plan is to control Jerusalem and to see to it that no Jewish person is alive to invite Jesus back to be King in Jerusalem over Israel.
3. God’s chosen Person and God’s chosen place
- a. God has determined to establish His authority on earth through a certain Person — Jesus Christ. He has also chosen a certain place as His throne — Jerusalem.

“Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion...” (Ps. 2:6).
 - b. Jesus will establish His throne in Jerusalem and will rule and reign over the nations from Jerusalem.
 - c. These two expressions of God’s authority — His Person and His Place — Constitute a test for all mankind. It is a test of man’s heart to see whether we will submit to the will of God.
 - d. Jesus will both rule in heaven as the Son of God (I.e., New Jerusalem) and on earth as the Son of David (earthly Jerusalem). The government of heaven and of earth will come fully together at the Second Coming. He is the only One who has the authority to bring both realms together.
 - e. There will be an explosion of God’s glory when the government of heaven is joined together with the government of the earth. This will usher in:
 - i. God’s fullness on earth (Hab. 2:14);
 - ii. Satan being cast into prison (Rev. 20:1–3);
 - iii. Resurrection of the dead and the created order being delivered from its bondage (Rom. 8:17–23; 11:15; Isa. 11:6–9; 35:1-8; 65:17–25).

4. Israel will also be a prototype of God's holy nation in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 2:2–3; Deut. 28:1–2).
 - a. This is part of God's call upon her as a nation and has not been replaced by the Gentile church.
 - b. Having been provoked to jealousy by the Gentile church at the End of the Age, Israel will in turn provoke the nations of the earth under the leadership of Jesus to walk out the commandments of the Lord (i.e. Torah and the Sermon on the Mount).
 - c. Nations will flock to Israel to learn from her so that they can walk in the same blessings and abundance.