

Session 9

Israel's Redemptive Role in God's Salvation Plan for Mankind

– Part 1 –

A. Introduction

1. God has sovereignly chosen Israel as the vehicle of His salvation and redemption for mankind.
2. Israel plays an important, crucial and irreplaceable role in God's redemptive story for nations and the world. This is something that many Gentile believers are unaware of.
3. This redemptive role of Israel has to be understood by seeing God's big picture concerning His eternal purpose for mankind, the restoration of Creation, and the heart of the Gospel.
4. Ultimately, choosing Israel to play a crucial redemptive role is within the context of God's heart for the salvation and redemption of all of humanity.

B. The Heart of the Gospel in Isaiah 61

1. Israel's role cannot be understood without first understanding the heart of the Gospel from Isaiah 61, which ultimately points back to the original mandate given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
2. Genesis 1:26–28 reveal what God desires, how He wants to relate with mankind, and how He has appointed mankind to rule and reign with Him.
 - a. God walked in the cool of the garden with Adam and Eve. His desire was for intimate fellowship with mankind.
 - b. God gave Adam and Eve the mandate to establish His rule over all the earth. This is commonly known as the "dominion mandate", and is the role that God has given to mankind, in partnership with Him.
3. Adam and Eve's sin against God resulted in the loss of these two things — their relationship with God and their right to rule and reign with Him, the latter of which was handed over to Satan.
4. In order to redeem what Adam and Eve had lost, Jesus came with the Gospel of grace and will come with the Gospel of the Kingdom to bring the fullness of redemption for mankind.

- a. The Gospel of grace refers to the aspect of forgiveness, healing, and restoration (Isa. 61:1–2a, Lk. 4:18–19). This was Jesus' focus at His First Coming. In God's redemption plan, Jesus came first to be crucified for the spiritual atonement and salvation of man.
- b. The Gospel of the Kingdom refers to the aspect of executing judgment, establishing justice, bringing joy to the earth, and establishing the Kingdom of God (i.e. Messianic Kingdom or Millennial Kingdom) on the earth (Isa. 61:2b–7). This will be Jesus' focus at His Second Coming. He will come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah to punish the wicked and execute justice.

C. The Centrepiece of God's Eternal Purpose

The centrepiece of God's 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).

1. Jesus will establish the Kingdom of God here on earth (Matt. 6:10), reversing what has been lost in Eden.
2. The fullness of God happens when the heavenly and earthly realms come together.
3. Only a Person who is both God and Man — Jesus — could bridge the gap between Heaven and Earth.

D. The Role of Israel in the Context of God's Heart in the Gospel

1. God's heart in the Gospel is the full redemption and restoration of mankind to Himself and as His co-rulers over Creation. After Adam and Eve's sin, God put His redemption plan into motion.
2. In Genesis 3:15, God prophesied of the coming seed of a woman who would bruise the serpent's head, and overcome or reverse what had been done at the fall. He decided to provide the means of salvation to mankind through a coming Messiah that — just like every other human being — would be borne of a woman.
3. God had to choose a human family lineage through which the Messiah would come and salvation made available to all who believe.
 - a. God sovereignly elected Abraham, then Isaac (not Ishmael), then Jacob (not Esau) as the family lineage through which the Messiah would come.
 - b. He then chose the line of Judah from the twelve tribes of Israel and then the line of King David.

4. Thus, Israel was and still is God's vehicle to bring His salvation, "good news" and His Kingdom to the ends of the earth. Romans 9:4–5 reveal the entrustments that God gave to Israel because of her sovereign election as God's vessel of salvation.

E. Israel as God's Vehicle of Salvation in the Old Testament

1. Israel was God's vehicle of salvation and the vessel through which God established His righteousness in the Old Testament.
2. As a nation, God chose Israel to be a witness of who He was as the one true God to the nations around her. God was declaring who He was to the nations through Israel.
3. God gave Israel the entrustments (Rom. 9:4–5) as a means through which He would reveal Himself. The ceremonial, moral and civil laws were given to Israel as a way for her to represent and express the true God of heaven and earth.
 - a. The ordinances regarding the worship of God revealed His absolute holiness and the need for a mediator between God and man. They also prophetically pointed to the ultimate Lamb of God who would eventually come to redeem mankind.
 - b. The moral laws given to Israel revealed the righteousness and justice of God and what He is looking for from the lives of His people.
 - c. The civil laws given to Israel revealed how a nation under the kingship and lordship of God should be run. They are also based on the righteousness, justice, grace and mercy of God.
4. Israel as God's vehicle for individual salvation
 - a. In the Old Testament, salvation for individuals was based on believing and trusting in the God of Israel, both for the Israelites and the non-Israelites.
 - b. Two examples of non-Israelites who believed and called upon the God of Israel were Ruth, a Moabite, and Naaman, the commander of the army of the Syrian King:
 - i. Ruth was the daughter-in-law of Naomi, an Israelite from the tribe of Judah. She chose to forsake her own people and heritage and clung to Naomi and her God: "*Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.*" (Ruth 1:16b).
 - ii. Naaman was a commander of the Syrian army who suffered from leprosy. Upon being healed through the waters in the Jordan River, he acknowledged and proclaimed the God of Israel as being the true God and vowed to no longer sacrifice to other gods, "*Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all*

the earth, except in Israel...your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord.” (2 Kings 2:15,17).

5. Israel as God's vehicle to establish righteousness and cleanse wickedness
 - a. In the Old Testament, God used the Israelites to drive out nations around them who were practising wickedness and defiling the land. This was God's means to establish righteousness and justice on the earth.
 - b. Many do not realise that the sins of a people living in a particular geographical region result in the defilement of the land, especially with the shedding of innocent blood, which cries out for justice (Gen. 4:10, Num. 35:33–34).
 - c. Israel was commanded to conquer the nations who were practising wickedness (through ungodly and wicked rituals such as infant sacrifice) and to put in place godly worship and righteous sacrifices. Through the Israelites, God was bringing redemption and deliverance to the land and establishing righteousness and justice.
 - d. Thus, it is not without reason that God commanded Joshua to fight and dispossess the surrounding nations. God did hold back until the sin of the people reached its full measure and the defilement of the land warranted His cleansing (Gen. 15:16).

F. Israel as God's Vehicle to Establish the New Covenant

1. Israel is also God's chosen vessel through which the New Covenant is established.
2. God had always intended to make the New Covenant with the nation of Israel, and not the Gentile Church (Jer. 31:31).
 - a. The New Covenant was made with Jewish people — specifically those who received and accepted Jesus as their Messiah at His First Coming.
 - b. The earliest believers in Jesus were Jewish, and it was not until the Apostle Paul, who was raised up as an apostle to the Gentiles, that the Gospel began to spread to the Gentiles rapidly. (This transition was also a result of the majority of the nation of Israel rejecting Jesus as their Messiah.)
 - c. Gentile believers are grafted into the Jewish New Covenant when we put our faith and trust in Jesus. This means that we get to share in and enjoy the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant which were originally given to the Jewish people. Thus, the spiritual root that supports the Gentile Church is Jewish.
3. Thus, Israel is the vehicle for the Gentile's spiritual salvation through being grafted into the Jewish root as part of the New Covenant.

G. Conclusion

1. By God's sovereign election, Israel has been chosen to play a crucial role in God's salvation plan for mankind.
2. It is important for Gentile believers to understand this big picture for greater alignment with God's heart and purposes for Israel and the nations.