

# Why Israel Matters

Friday, October 13, 2023

6:16 PM

Ezekiel 36:8-11; 22-24; 36

8 “But you, mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. 9 I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, 10 and I will cause many people to live on you—yes, all of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11 I will increase the number of people and animals living on you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

22 “Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. 23 I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

24 “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

36 Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.’

*In light of what happened in Israel this week and the calls by many to support and pray for Israel followed by a clash of opposition from those who call for support for the Palestinian people, or worse yet those who seemingly justify the attacks of Hamas as warranted and needful; I felt led to take a moment this morning to talk about "Why Israel Matter's"*

Now before I set off my own barrage of reactions along the lines of "Well don't the Palestinians matter?" or "How can you support what Israel is doing in response?" "What about the lives of innocent people in Gaza?" Let me just say that YES, of course the Palestinian people matter. All people matter. And just as we should be praying for Israel, we should also remember to pray for those who are not Jews whose lives are being affected - many who are entering into eternity without God - many who are innocent in this conflict - and many who are indeed enemies of the Jewish people; yet whom God has called us to pray for even them.

But as with so many basic Christian principles; it seems to me that many in today's world and even today's Christian world, do not truly understand why we, as believers are called to support and pray for Israel.

Psalm 122:6-9 (ESV)

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! “May they be secure who love you! 7 Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!” 8 For my brothers and companions' sake I will say, “Peace be within you!” 9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

There are several reasons for this...

1. We have not done a good job of teaching about Israel in the church
2. The error of Replacement Theology that falsely teaches that the church has replaced Israel

So let's just put that to rest right now with a quick look at Romans Chapter 11

Romans 11

11 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: 3 “Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me”? 4 And what was God's answer to him? “I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” 5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. 6 And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

7 What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened, 8 as it is written:

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,  
eyes that could not see  
and ears that could not hear,  
to this very day.”

9 And David says:

“May their table become a snare and a trap,  
a stumbling block and a retribution for them.  
10 May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,  
and their backs be bent forever.”

11 Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. 12 But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

13 I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry 14 in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, 26 and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

“The deliverer will come from Zion;

he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

27 And this is my covenant with them  
when I take away their sins.”

28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. 30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you. 32 For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments,  
and his paths beyond tracing out!

34 “Who has known the mind of the Lord?  
Or who has been his counselor?”

35 “Who has ever given to God,  
that God should repay them?”

36 For from him and through him and for him are all things.  
To him be the glory forever! Amen.

3. The third reason why we need to better understand "Why Israel Matters" is the rising tide of Anti-Israel Sentiment and Rhetoric that is being spewed within our own nation.
  - a. It seems there are increasingly more voices that are not afraid to voice their opposition to Israel and who want us, as a nation to remove our support. Like with other issues, we in the church who voice the need to support and pray for Israel are looked upon as out of touch and even hatemongers for holding such views.
  - b. I want you to understand that the main reason for this is Satan's desire to destroy God's people. Satan hates Israel, because God loves them. Satan has long desired the extermination of that which God has called His own. We will deal with this in a minute, but Satan knows that Israel is a huge part of God's plan to reveal Himself and to bring His salvation to the World

So why does Israel Matter? Let's look at 4 simple truths that tell us why

## God Chose Israel

Deuteronomy 7:6-8

6 For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

7 The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

## God Loves Israel

Jeremiah 31:3

3 The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

Deuteronomy 10:15

15 Yet the Lord set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today.

1 Kings 10:9

9 Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king to maintain justice and righteousness."

## God Made A Covenant With Israel

A covenant to give them a home, to provide for them, to protect them and to restore them to the land He had given them

- To Give them a home

Genesis 13:15

15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

Jeremiah 32:22

22 You gave them this land you had sworn to give their ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey.

- To Provide for them

God provided everything they needed - physically and Spiritually

Nehemiah 9:21

21 For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want (Psalm 23:1)

- To Protect them
  - Psalm 20:1 "May the LORD answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you."
  - Deuteronomy 28:7 "The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven."
  - Isaiah 38:6 "And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria."
  - Jeremiah 50:34 "God will defend them."
  - Psalm 121:4 "Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep."
  - Exodus 15:3 "The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name."
  - Isaiah 31:5 "Like birds hovering overhead, so the LORD of Hosts will protect Jerusalem. He will shield it and deliver it; He will pass over it and preserve it."
  - 2 Kings 19:34 "I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant."

- To Restore them to the land he gave them

Amos 9:14-15

14 and I will bring my people Israel back from exile. “They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. 15 I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,” says the Lord your God.

Ezekiel 36:24

24 “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

*In 1897 Theodor Herzl invited 204 Jewish leaders to Basel, Switzerland, for the First Zionist Congress. He opened the conference with these words: “There is a land without a people, there is a people without a land; give the people without a land to a land without a people.” Then he made an astonishing prediction: “In five years or fifty years, we will have a homeland of our own.” His purpose was to put in place an organization that would legally secure a homeland for the Jewish people in what had formerly been the land of Israel. Herzl concluded the conference by saying, “If you will it, it is no dream.”*

*In the 19th century, Jewish people began returning to Israel. Russian Jews founded the city of Tel Aviv and Degania (the first collective settlement that was called a kibbutz). Before the State of Israel was founded, thousands of Jewish people returned to settle in the land; and by 1948, about 657,000 Jewish people resided there.*

*The Balfour Declaration, 1917: the UK with support of four other nations declared a homeland for the Jews in Palestine after defeating the Turks*

*The San Remo Article 22, April 1920: Ratified the Balfour Declaration as internationally binding law*

*The League of Nations 1922: A legal document titled “Mandate for Palestine” was unanimously approved by all 51 states of the League, laying down the Jewish legal rights in Palestine: “Recognition has been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country.”*

On **November 29, 1947**, Theodor Herzl's dream became a reality. The United Nations voted 33 to 13 (with 10 abstentions) to partition what was then called Palestine into two independent states: one Arab and one Jewish. **UN Resolution 181**: UN member states voted to partition Palestine in 1947, although with a smaller share for the Jews. The original Mandate for Palestine had given the area east of the Jordan river to the Arabs and west to the Jews, but the UN resolution allotted 77% of that area as a Jewish homeland.

Great Britain, which had administered the land since 1920 under a mandate from the former League of Nations, did everything in its power to hamper statehood for the Jewish people. But on **May 14, 1948**, the British evacuated; and Israel declared independence for the first time in 2,500 years. The 1948 invasion by the surrounding Arab nations and their surprising defeat led to Israel declaring independence in May of that year.

In **1967 another miracle of restoration** took place when Israel, threatened with annihilation by the PLO and the hostilities of the surrounding nations of Egypt, Jordan and Syria initiated what would become known as the 6 day war that ended with a resounding Israeli victory that **doubled the size of the new Jewish homeland**.

Today Israel's Jewish population numbers about 6.5 million. In the past 63 years, those returning have rebuilt and cultivated the land, bringing it back to life and beauty (36:8–12).

In **1948**, there were approximately ten million Jewish people around the world who had survived the Holocaust, and **about 600,000 were living in Israel**. Of those, only 23 of them believed in Yeshua as their Messiah. There were some churches led by denominations and missionaries in Israel, but there were no Messianic congregations at all.

In **1989 Israel's Jewish population had grown to 3.5 million**, and by this point, the estimated number of believers had reached 1,200. There were now 30 congregations.

By **1999 there were 4.8 million Jews living in Israel**, 81 Messianic congregations, and an estimated 5,000 believers.

In **2017, 300 congregations** were counted in a survey conducted by Israel College of the Bible, undertaken to get a clearer picture of the body of Messiah in Israel [5]. It has become increasingly difficult to accurately identify the number of **Jewish believers in Israel**, but a conservative estimate is now **30,000**.



## God Is Using Israel to Accomplish His Plans

### Genesis 12:1-3

12 The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

How has Abraham & his descendants (Israel) blessed us? Because through them God has revealed Himself to the world, His powerful and unconditional love, His salvation, His promises of a dwelling place prepared and provided by God, what it is like to walk in relationship with God - learning to trust, follow and be obedient to His word. Through Israel we see that there is only one true and living God.

Through Israel, God brought forth the messiah - the savior of the World - His son, Jesus - who died for our sins.

Through Israel the Church was born and spread out to the ends of the earth

We have already seen that God used Israel's rejection of Christ to bring an open door for the Gentiles

That's why the enemy hates Israel so much. He doesn't want God's plans to be fulfilled

And Through Israel we will see the prophecies of the Last days play out before our very eyes

Wars and rumors of wars many of which will involve the nation of Israel... It is a physical representation of the Spiritual battles for the salvation of mankind that are taking place (some refer to the prophecies of Psalm 83 as pertaining to one or more of these uprisings - the war of extermination)

The rebuilding of the Temple and the reinstatement of the sacrifices

The rapture of the Church

The war of Gog and Magog (some people refer to this as the first war of Gog and Magog) -

*This war specifically encompasses an outer ring of Islamic nations beyond Israel's borders. It is prophesied to be led by Russia and will join with Turkey and Iran to the north and other nations across northern Africa. They will band together in an attempt to attack Israel. Their desire will be to increase plunder and to take advantage of an opportunity to attack, possibly due to the chaos caused by the Rapture of the Church. Plunder in today's currency could involve Israel's natural resources, whether oil or some of the other minerals that Israel possesses.*

*Ezekiel 38-39 prophesies that the Lord Himself will supernaturally defeat the Gog-Magog coalition on the mountains of Israel. Afterward, Israel will collect the weapons of war and use them as a source of fuel for a number of years. This second end times war we anticipate as coming up at some point in the not too distant future.*

The rise of the antichrist - a man of peace who will make a covenant of peace for Israel that will last for 3/12 years

The abomination that causes desolation

The Great Tribulation

The wars described in Revelation 6, 8, 9, 12 and Daniel 11

The battle of Armageddon - Joel 3, Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19

*During that pitched battle between the Antichrist and the rebelling kings is when Jesus Christ, at last, comes to defeat the Antichrist and set up His Millennial Kingdom. It's known as the Battle of Armageddon. As all of these armies are arrayed in the Valley of Megiddo, Jesus Christ gloriously arrives! Jesus will set foot on the Mount of Olives. He will merely speak a word and the soldiers in these armies just fall apart. People have been under a false impression that Armageddon is going to be a horrific war with a great clash of armies, but really it is going to be the shortest war in all of history. Jesus Christ merely utters a word and all of those armies rot right where they are standing. The blood will fill the valley up to the level of a horse's bridle.*

**Zechariah 14:1-5 (The battle of Armageddon)**

**14 A day of the Lord is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls.**

2 I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. 3 Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. 4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. 5 You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake[a] in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

#### Revelation 19:11-21

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter."<sup>[a]</sup> He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:  
king of kings and lord of lords.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small."

19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. 20 But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. 21 The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The Final battle or The second Battle of Gog & Magog - After the 1000 reign of Christ on Earth - which by the way will be in Israel

Zechariah 14:9

9 The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.

Why does Israel Matter - Because it is God's prophetic time clock

What can we do to pray for and support Israel now?

Pray for God's will to be done and that through the events that He has already revealed will take place, that many would come to a knowledge of His love and salvation through Jesus Christ (Our Jewish brothers and sisters as well as the Palestinian and other Arab peoples

Pray for the Peace and protection of Israel (Note this also means praying for their peace with God)

Pray for those who have suffered great persecution and loss. That they might find peace and comfort in God and in His Son, Jesus Christ the Messiah

Pray for Christians in Israel and those in the surrounding nations to find safety and provision and to endure as witnesses for Christ in the midst of great hardship. (pray for frontline workers who seek to bring aid to those in need)

Pray for repentance and salvation for those in Israel, Gaza, The West Bank and the surrounding nations, and even those who are their greatest enemies

Pray for a new spirit of love and support for Israel.

Pray that eyes would be open, especially in the church to the lies of the enemy that seek to turn our hearts against Israel