

# Israel & Beyond

## Multiple Passages

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Today, I want to tackle an issue that's close to the heart of Calvary Chapel, biblical prophecy, and ultimately the heart and word of God: our perspective on Israel, its land, and its place in God's prophetic plan, and why it's so essential for us to land on the correct side of this theological debate. As we see Israel and Iran at war, I believe this topic is appropriate as we navigate the moral road about when we should support Israel, when we shouldn't, and why or why not.

### Application

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS As many of you know, last night the US bombed three major Nuclear sites in Iran that only we had the technology to disable effectively. The regional responses and outcomes of this action are nearly impossible to anticipate, but the decision is understandable. When you have a regime whose stated motto and purpose is death to Israel and death to America, and have shown the resolve to act upon that premise, preventing the acquisition of nuclear arms is of paramount importance. Those who simply want to choose the path of "believing the best" about Iran's intentions don't know history, and they don't understand the radical Islam that permeates the philosophy of Ayatollah Khomeini and his government. All false religions are evil in the sense that they detract from Christ, but Islam has an extra measure of destructiveness in this lifetime, seeing that its true purpose is to forcefully bring all infidels and unbelievers under subjection to Islam and its sharia law. Those who don't comply will die. Take this woman's word for it, who lived under this regime [video].

### Illustration

When pastor, author, and Bible commentator John MacArthur was once asked why he held a dispensational, pre-millennial eschatology, he answered, "That's easy. Israel."

Israel has the most unique and longest-standing ethnic history of all people groups. Conquered and divided, and gathered and scattered, it's nothing short of a divine miracle that they are a people group dwelling in the land that was committed to them directly from God.

For generations, the Jewish diaspora (dispersion) dwelt in pockets all around the world following the Roman sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. The Satanic agendas throughout all time to destroy the chosen people of God culminated in recent history in the holocaust of Nazi Germany in the early 20th century. Who would have ever realized that God, in His divine and sovereign way, would use all of the horrors and impossibilities to fulfill prophecy by re-establishing the Jewish people in their homeland? On May 14, 1948, the Israeli Declaration of Independence was proclaimed, establishing the first Jewish state in nearly 2,000 years. A dead language was revived, unparalleled in the history of the world.

## Scripture

Isaiah 11:11-12 (NKJV) It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Since that point in time, this peice of realestate, smaller thean the state of New Jersey and located in one of the most remote parts of the earth, has been the epicenter of the world's attention, the thorn in the side of Islamic regimes everywhere, and the most prosperous, fertile, blessed nation in the Middle East.

Yet despite all this, and so much more we will cover today, there are many within the church who see Israel as nothing more than a geopolitical anomaly, a nation that no longer holds any unique place in God's heart or prophetic plan. While I certainly don't believe this is an issue of salvation, I do believe it is an issue of importance regarding how we interpret God's Word, His literal promises, and our posture toward the ethnic, physical, (not always political) nation of Israel. Many (not all) who adopt views that dismiss Israel's place within God's everlasting covenant have moved toward anti-semitic tendencies.

## Illustration

Martin Luther, the great reformer to whom we are grateful for bringing the church back to the principles of Sola-Scriptura and salvation by grace through faith alone, having fully adopted replacement theology (the the church had replaced Israel in God's sight and Israel has no place withing God's covenants) wrote some of the most vitriolic and anti semitic writings in exsistance... so evil that the Nazi party used them as propoganda for their treatment of the Jews. Some suggest that Luther was plagued by a disease that caused him to lose his faculties at the end of his life. Regardless, the enemy got hold of it.

No, I'm not suggesting that those who adopt this theology are antisemitic. The Lutheran church has denounced these writings of Luther. However, I do believe that there is a concentrated spiritual attack from the great despiser of God's covenants to dismiss, devalue, and destroy the heritage of the Jewish people and the promises afforded to them by God Himself.

Satan knows that prophetically, his demise is directly correlated with Christ's return. Christ's return is directly correlated to events that require an existing nation of Israel, and he has been on a mission to destroy those people and that nation to this day.

A theological framework is growing rapidly in today's Christian circles, rooted in an eschatological (end-times) doctrine often referred to as post-millennialism or amillennialism. There are slight differences between the two, but the main agreement surrounds the identity of the ethic Jewish nation and the church. We might refer to this doctrine as "Replacement Theology." Other names you might hear are "fulfillment theology" and "covenant theology." There are different variations of the extent to which some define Israel's place and future in God's promises, but they all agree that the New Covenant has superseded the Old Covenant, including the promises of God given to Abraham and His physical descendants.

Conservative commentators like Tucker Carlson and Candace Owens have adopted a much harsher view on Israel recently, popularizing the idea that Israel shouldn't be regarded as prized in the eyes of God or essential to God's prophetic plan.

By way of introduction, take a quick listen to this recent portion of an interview Tucker Carlson did with Senator Ted Cruz (who unfortunately was not as prepared as he should have been to go toe to toe with Tucker).

So why does Israel matter, and why should it matter to the church how we define Israel and the church? Additionally, what are some common misconceptions about the dispensational view of Israel that require clarification?

## Main Point

### Point 1

The Reliability of God's Covenants

Dr. John Walvoord raises an important question that is worth asking:

### Quote

— Dr. John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy*, 1962

"God made promises to Israel (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) that are unconditional and eternal. If God's promises to Israel can be broken, what hope does the Church have?"

Many within the Covenant Theology circles will claim that God's promises were not broken, but that they were transferred spiritually to the church. There are multiple potential dangers I've seen in this framework.

The more literal statements that God makes, the more you begin to allegorize or spiritualize, the shakier ground you stand on regarding Bible interpretation. Where does one draw the line as to what's literal or figurative? I admit that there are some things in the scripture that are difficult to understand and determining their literal or figurative nature. However, typically, when the Bible intends to be metaphorical or allegorical, it explicitly states such an intention. When it wants to be literal, we need to trust the factual statements it makes. Where God makes literal, physical, or spiritual promises to the ethnic people of Israel, it's unsafe to pick and choose which ones are now merely spiritual or which ones are now void. There are real-life, modern-day implications about the real estate within the Middle East, who has a claim to it, and what political strategies should be implemented in securing its peace. I recently heard a proponent of covenant theology make the assertion that "God's covenant with Israel has nothing to do with land, property or the establishment of any physical kingdom of Israel." Considering the plain reading of the Bible, I would tremble to make such a statement. So let's get to some of the main places we find the establishment of the covenant promises that God made with this nation.

## Scripture

Genesis 12:1-3 (NKJV) I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

## Scripture

Genesis 17:7-8 (NKJV) "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Everlasting - to be unbroken throughout time.

To Abraham and His descendants - the ethnic line of the Jewish people.

## Scripture

[Psa 105:8-11 NKJV] - 8 He remembers His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, 9 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac, 10 And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, 11 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance..."

## Scripture

[Jer 32:37-41 NKJV] - 37 "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38 They shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39 'then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 41 Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul."

## Quote

— John Walvoord, *Israel in Prophecy*

"God's promises to Abraham were not spiritual only, but had a literal national and territorial component. Supporting Israel as a nation acknowledges the ongoing validity of that promise."

## Quote

— Spurgeon

In his sermon "The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews," delivered on June 16, 1864, Spurgeon stated regarding his reading of Romans 9-11 and Jeremiah's prophecies of the restored Israel: "The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything, first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel."

## Main Point

### Point 2

#### The Continuity of God's Covenants

Another assertion of Covenant theology is that there is a spiritual continuity between the Abrahamic covenant to the ethnic Jews and now the church. This requires one to accept that the church is the new Israel and the old physical promises are now spiritual or allegorical promises, not to ethnic Jews, but to the church.

The Bible reveals a profound theological truth concerning the relationship between Israel and the church. While both are encompassed within the covenant of God, they retain distinct and complementary identities. This distinction highlights God's faithfulness to His promises to Israel while also emphasizing the inclusion (grafting in) of the Gentiles in the church through Christ. We can see that in the scripture, God, in the New Covenant of Christ's sacrifice, has made one new way for all to come to eternal salvation, both for Jews and Gentiles alike. However, this does not erase their distinction as two unique groups with specific promises and prophetic implications.

#### The New Covenant:

In Christ, a new entity has been born. This is never referred to as "The new Israel" in the New Testament, but rather as "The Body of Christ, the church," which is comprised of both Jews and Gentiles who have received Christ as the Messiah. This, however, does not erase their ethnic distinctions or unique prophetic promises made to the ethnic Jewish nation.

## Quote

— Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 1947

"The Church is not spiritual Israel. It is a new organism, the body of Christ."

Some would say, "Well, Galatians 3:28 states there is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ..." In the sense of justification, that is true. No matter what our national identity, justification comes the same for all. Paul goes on to say there is neither male nor female, but he certainly wasn't erasing gender identities or distinctions. In other words, the creation of one new body in Christ doesn't erase the distinction of ethnic Israel or the promises made to them. Paul makes this clear in Romans, chapters 9-11. Some suggest that when Paul uses the term "Israel" in Romans 11, regarding "all Israel shall be saved," that he is talking about the new spiritual Israel, the church, not ethnic Israel. Let's examine to see if this holds.

## Scripture

Romans 9:1-4 (NKJV) I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises.

## Scripture

Romans 9:30-31 (NKJV) What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

## Scripture

Romans 10:1-2 (NKJV) Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

## Scripture

Romans 11:1 (NKJV) I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

## Scripture

Romans 11:25-27 (NKJV) For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."

## Scripture

Romans 11:28-29 (NKJV) Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

## Quote

— *Irenaeus (c. 180 AD)*

"The promises (to Israel) were not annulled, but they remain in full force." (Against Heresies, Book 5)

## Main Point

### Point 3

#### The Prophetic Nature of the Covenants

#### Jesus Confirms Israel's Future Role

### Scripture

Acts 1:6-7 (NKJV) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."

Jesus' disciples had a prophetic paradigm that, prior to Christ's resurrection, was misplaced. They had failed to see the spiritual nature of God's kingdom and the need for the gospel to spread to the hearts of men. However, that doesn't mean that their belief about a future kingdom of Israel under the Messiah's reign was misinformed or incorrect.

On the contrary, their belief that Israel would inherit a divine kingdom came from the teachings of Jesus himself.

### Scripture

Matthew 19:28 (NKJV) So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus was not giving them a parable or allegorical picture, but rather speaking of a true future reality in which they would rule with Christ over a physical kingdom that would be established in the land of Israel.

When asked about this future in Acts 1, notice Jesus doesn't correct their belief, but rather confronts their misunderstanding about the timing. In other words, Jesus affirms that there will be a time when the kingdom is restored to ethnic Israel, but that the timing is not known by man, but only by the Father in heaven. Until that time, they would receive power to be witnesses of Christ so that the future Kingdom could also be open to all people who would receive Christ as their king.

## Main Point

### Point 4

#### Misconceptions About Dispensationalism

#### 1. All Jews Are Automatically Saved



Romans 10:9 – "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe... you will be saved." Salvation is always by faith in Christ—Jew or Gentile. Romans 11 does state that at a future time, there will be national repentance and acceptance of Jesus as their Messiah, and their entrance into the kingdom will be based on their faith and the merits of Christ. But being born a physical Jew does not ensure eternal salvation.

## Scripture

Zechariah 12:10 (NKJV) "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."

### 2. Support for Israel = Approval of Their Government

## Scripture

Proverbs 14:34 (NKJV) Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Regarding Israel's claim to the land God promised them, it's essential that we support their existence. The everlasting covenant that promised them the land is irreversible. Their ability to enjoy that land is conditional, but that is between them and God.

However, this does not = approval for all policy decisions that the secular government of Israel makes. If Israel allows abortion, Christians should stand against it. If Israel creates immoral or unethical laws, Christians have the moral obligation to stand for righteousness. Supporting Israel in their land and existence and acknowledging their place in God's prophetic plan is not a carte blanche acceptance of everything the secular nation does.

### 3. Support for Israel = Support for Judaism

Some seem to believe that to support Israel as still in covenant with God means that Christians should support Judaism as a religion. Let me make it perfectly clear, ethnic Jews who still practice Judaism as their form of worship to God do not know God and are incomplete.

Jesus rejected the false worship of Judaism according to the Pharisaical practices and seeking righteousness by the law, as did Paul and the apostles. Paul was sickened by the Judaizers who were trying to bring Christians into the religious system of Judaism in order to be saved. Read the book of Hebrews, and you'll discover that to move to Judaism from Christianity is to step backwards from God's redemptive plan. Christians should not be supporting the building of a Jewish temple (though the prospects have exciting prophetic implications) or acting as though Jews are worshipping God in truth without Jesus.

### 4. Dispensationalism Is a New Doctrine

#### A. Claim: Dispensationalism was invented by John Darby

While Darby systemitized dispensational and pretrib rapture theology, in a package that was new to the time, he didn't invent it. Darby was a preacher who was incredibly committed to the gospel and the Word. Unlike someone like Joseph Smith or Charles Taze Russell, Darby's views rested on the complete authority of the Bible. Additionally, he was not the first or the last to postulate the ideas of Israel and the church being distinct, or the rapture of the church coming prior to the tribulation period.



## B. Replacement Theology's Rise Post-70 A.D.

After the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. and the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 A.D., Jewish life in Israel diminished.

Church theologians like Origen and Augustine began interpreting prophecies allegorically. Augustine's *City of God* (early 5th century) spiritualized the millennium and the role of Israel, laying the groundwork for amillennialism. But much of this interpretation was due to the nonexistence of a physical Israel nation.

### Conclusion: God Says What He Means

"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." — Romans 11:29 When God says "Israel," He means Israel. The Church is precious, redeemed, and called—but she is not Israel.

A proper understanding of these truths magnifies God's covenant faithfulness, Christ's future reign, and the reliability of Scripture.

### Quote

— *Dr. Chuck Missler*

"We have seen the dry bones of Israel come together. We are watching them receive breath. The King is coming."