

ISRAEL

The nation and the people

Introduction

Israel is a tiny Nation globally speaking. In comparison to New Zealand, Israel fits snugly between Auckland and Cape Reinga. It's intriguing that world leaders are so concerned about this 'Insignificant' country, and not a week goes by where Israel is not mentioned in the news. Perhaps Israel is not so 'insignificant' after all.

It seems as though not a page is turned in the Bible where Israel isn't mentioned or alluded to, and yet many Christians live as though it doesn't exist. Why? What is the big deal with Israel and the Jews? As Christians, what should our attitude and belief be towards Israel? Does it really matter?

These questions will be answered in this paper, and while this is just an overview, I pray the truth will be made clear, and God will bring revelation in your hearts.

Israel's history in a Nutshell

The birth of the Jewish race began with a visitation and promise from God to a man.

*¹Then the LORD told Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives, and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. ²I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you." **Genesis 12:1-3 (NLT)***

That is how the Israelites (or Jews as we know them today) and the Nation of Israel began. Below is a condensed timeline of her history.

BC

17c	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - patriarchs of the Jewish people settle in the Land of Israel. Famine forces the Israelites to migrate to Egypt.
13c	Exodus from Egypt. 40 years of wandering in the desert.
13-12c	Israelites settle in the Land of Israel
1020	Jewish monarchy established with Saul.
1000	Jerusalem made capital of David's kingdom.
960	First Temple, built in Jerusalem by King Solomon.
930	Divided kingdom: Judah and Israel
722-720	Israel crushed by Assyrians, many Jews exiled
586	Judah conquered by Babylonia. Jerusalem and First Temple destroyed. Most Jews exiled.
538-515	Many Jews return from Babylonia and Temple rebuilt.
332 BC	Land conquered by Alexander the Great. Hellenistic rule.
166-160	Maccabean revolt and desecration of the Temple
142-129	Jewish autonomy under Hasmoneans.
129-63	Jewish independence under Hasmonean monarchy.
63	Jerusalem captured by Roman general, Pompey.

AD

30-33	Ministry of Jesus Christ.
66	Jewish revolt against the Romans.
70	Destruction of Jerusalem and Second Temple.
313-636	Byzantine rule.
614	Persian invasion.

636-1099	Arab rule.
691	Muslim mosque, Dome of the Rock is built on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
1099-1291	Crusader domination.
1291-1516	Mamluk rule.
1517-1917	Ottoman rule.
1917	400 years of Ottoman rule ended by British conquest.
1918-48	British rule.
1939-45	World War 2. Holocaust in Europe.
1948	State of Israel proclaimed (14 May). Israel invaded by five Arab states (15 May). War of Independence (May 1948-July 1949).
1949	Israel admitted to United Nations as 59th member. ¹

As can be seen, Israel has had a very tumultuous history. Peace has been very scarce for the Jews.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem

⁶*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May all who love this city prosper. Psalm 122:6 (NLT)*

We are told to pray for the peace of Israel, but how can we do that intelligently, and accurately? By becoming watchmen.

⁶*O Jerusalem, I have posted watchmen on your walls; they will pray to the LORD day and night for the fulfillment of his promises. Take no rest, all you who pray. ⁷Give the LORD no rest until he makes Jerusalem the object of praise throughout the earth. Isaiah 62:6-7 (NLT)*

A watchman is someone who looks out for signs of danger, upheaval, strife (etc.) and sounds the alarm. Jesus instructed us in Luke 21 to watch and pray. I believe that if we are to pray effectively for the peace of Jerusalem (Israel and Jewish people), then we must keep watch by following unbiased current affairs regarding Israel, and pray for peace accordingly.

Good places to start:

- www.israelnationalnews.com
- www.revive-israel.org

Work against Israel, reap the consequences

³*I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.” Genesis 12:3a (NLT)*

If we take the Bible literally (and we should) this promise, encouragement and warning should be taken extremely seriously. In short, if any person, people or country blesses Israel (in word, action or attitude), they will be blessed. If any person, people of country curses Israel (in word, action or attitude), they will be cursed.

I'm no conspiracy theorist, but in the light of Genesis 12, I do find the following coincidences hard to ignore...

- **October 29th 1991**

President George Bush launched his 'Land-for-peace' plan by giving away Israel land. **That very day** what was called 'The Perfect Storm' hit The Eastern Atlantic Seaboard of America. Ocean waves peaked at 100 feet, the height of 10-story buildings. Waves 30 feet high battered the New England coast, destroying 200 homes and damaging even the president Bush's home. It was a storm so rare that the weather patterns required to create it only happen about once every 100 years.

- **August 23rd 1992**

Middle East peace talks resumed in Washington, D.C. with hope that there would be a great breakthrough. These talks focused on surrendering the Biblical lands of Judea and Samaria in exchange for peace. **That very day**, Florida was the target for one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history. Hurricane Andrew ripped through the state with an eye more than 30 miles wide and winds up to 178 miles per hour leaving behind a 32 billion dollar disaster.

- **April 30th 2003**

America was positioned to be the catalyst for the so-called solution to the Middle East crisis. As Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas was sworn in, the 'Road Map' peace plan was set in motion. **The very next day** began the worst month of tornadoes in United States history - more than 500 in a single month. Under normal conditions, 1,000 tornadoes hit the United States each year, but in just eight days that May, 375 twisters ripped across the heartland of America.

- **August 7th 2005**

The US pressured Israel into evacuating Gaza. Families wept, losing everything. While they dug up their dead to re-bury them in new cemeteries, President George W. Bush applauded the dividing of God's hand. **The very next day**, on August 8th a tropical depression formed and Hurricane Katrina pounded the US. It became the largest disaster in US history. New Orleans was devastated. Over 1 million were forced from their homes, costing close to 200 billion.

- **April 19th 2010**

Fox News reports that the U.S. will no longer automatically support Israel in the United Nations. **The very next day**, on April the 20th, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explodes. Worst Ecological disaster in US history. Researchers have detected areas of dispersed underwater oil 30 miles long, seven miles wide, and hundreds of feet thick.

The above examples are only a handful of an overwhelming amount of 'coincidences' where it seems a country's actions against Israel result in swift reaction in the form of a calamity.

⁴⁸"Much is required from those to whom much is given, and much more is required from those to whom much more is given. Luke 12:48b (NLT)

The United States, currently the most influential super power in the world, has a great responsibility. Because of her influence, heritage and blessing she must tread very carefully with her words, actions and attitudes concerning Israel. God will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7), and we must pay attention.

The following prophecy was given by Lance Lambert, renowned Bible teacher, On Sunday 18th April 2010, in Jerusalem, Israel.

"Do not fear neither be dismayed for that which is coming upon the face of the earth, for I am with you, says The Lord. Nevertheless I have a serious controversy with the nations. They are seeking to divide My Land says The Lord, the land that I covenanted to give to Abraham and to his seed after him through Isaac and Jacob, as an everlasting inheritance. This I will not allow without devastating judgment upon those nations who pursue this plan. I have arisen with intense and furious anger and will not back down until I have destroyed their well being. I will cause their economies to fail, and their financial system to break down, and even the climate to fail them! I will turn them upside down and inside out and they will not know what has hit them, whether they be super powers or not. For I am the only One, the Almighty God and besides me there is none to compare.

Do they believe that in their arrogance they can contradict and nullify covenants that I the Almighty have made? Do they believe that they can change what has gone forth from My mouth with impunity? It is My Word and My decree that has gone forth concerning the seed of Abraham. It will not be changed by man. I and I alone am Almighty. Do not fear!

For this reason a new and a far more serious phase of judgment is commencing. Do not fear, it is I who is shaking all things. Remember that in Me you have peace but in the world tribulation. Trust Me! I am shaking all things so that which cannot be shaken may remain. When all your circumstances become abnormal, discover in Me your peace, your rest and your fulfilment.

In this phase the old and powerful nations will become as if they are third world countries, super powers will no longer be super powers but countries such as India and China will arise to take their place. A great company of the redeemed will come out of these two countries. In all this change, do not fear.

I know your weakness and your tendency to fear, but do not be dismayed at these things. In the midst of all this shaking, this turmoil and strife, there are two peoples that lie at its' heart, the true and living church and Israel. I will use these matters, these events, to purify one and to save the other! Do not fear, above the storms, the shaking, and the conflict, I am the Everlasting and Almighty One. In Me you cannot be shaken, you can only lose what is not worth holding!"²

Don't trust the media

"Whoever controls the media controls the culture" Allen Ginsberg, 1926-1997

We drastically underestimate the influential power of media. Liberals say that media has no effect on people. If that were true, then the billions of dollars spent in advertising each year is wasted money.

One news report, one article, one photo can spark (and fuel) wrong belief... and in this case anti-Semitism.

Remember that Adolf Hitler's main form of propaganda was media, and he wielded it so effectively that a once morally upright, intelligent people became murderers of 6 million Jews.

Do the global media moguls' have a pro-Israel or anti-Israel bent? When was the last time we saw a news report concerning Israel that was supportive of her? In my experience, when something newsworthy happens regarding Israel, it usually makes her out to be the 'bad guy'. When the truth is eventually discovered (as the case was with the Flotilla conflict of 2010), an amendment or update is rarely made, and by then the damage is already done and that anti-Semitic spark has turned into a fire in the thinking of the masses.

Replacement Theology

Replacement Theology essentially teaches that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan. Adherents of this belief teach that the Jews are no longer God's chosen people, and that God does not have specific future plans for the Nation of Israel.

"The Jewish nation no longer has a place as the special people of God; that place has been taken by the Christian community which fulfils God's purpose for Israel" Bruce Waltke³

A Replacement Theologist will be quick to tell you that because of Israel's unbelief and rejection of Jesus as Messiah, God broke His covenant with them, and has 'replaced' their part in God's plan with the Church.

"For such ruthless wrath of God is sufficient evidence that they [the Jews] assuredly have erred and gone astray. Even a child can comprehend this. For one dare not regard God as so cruel that he would punish his own people so long, so terrible, so unmercifully... Therefore this work of wrath is proof that the Jews, surely rejected by God, are no longer his people, and neither is he any longer their God" Martin Luther⁴

Firstly, let's look at God's covenant to Abraham:

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. ²I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to make you into a mighty nation." ³At this, Abram fell face down in the dust. Then God said to him, ⁴"This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of not just one nation, but a multitude of nations! ⁵What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram; now you will be known as Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. ⁶I will give you millions of descendants who will represent many nations. Kings will be among them! ⁷I will continue this everlasting covenant between us, generation after generation. It will continue between me and your offspring forever. And I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸Yes, I will give all this land of Canaan to you and to your offspring forever. And I will be their God. **Genesis 17:1-7 (NLT)**

I think 'everlasting covenant' is pretty self-explanatory, don't you?

Secondly, let's consider God's new Covenant with Israel:

³⁵It is the LORD who provides the sun to light the day and the moon and stars to light the night. It is he who stirs the sea into roaring waves. His name is the LORD Almighty, and this is what he says: ³⁶"I am as likely to reject my people Israel as I am to do away with the laws of nature! ³⁷Just as the heavens cannot be measured and the foundation of the earth cannot be explored, so I will not consider casting them away forever for their sins. I, the LORD, have spoken! **Jeremiah 31:35-37 (NLT)**

No hint of replacing Israel in these verses!

Thirdly, let's consider God replacing us:

If we hold to the belief that because the Jews haven't done a good job then God has broken His 'everlasting covenant' toward them (and replaced Israel with the Church), we must also have to believe that if the Church doesn't do a good job (and we haven't), then God will surely replace us with someone else!

If we Christians do not believe that God keeps all His covenants, how can we know for certain that our covenant with Him in the body and blood of His Son, Jesus, will never be broken or invalidated? **Peter Tsukahira**

There should be no doubt whatsoever that Replacement Theology is blatantly erroneous, and that it quite possibly has its roots in anti-Semitism.

Applying promises for Israel to us as Christians

I need to make a parenthesis here. We are usually very quick to apply specific promises and purposes for Israel to our lives as Gentile Believers. For example, the classic Jeremiah 29:11 promise:

*¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. **Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)***

Who hasn't heard this amazing promise preached, or preached it as a personal promise to Christians? However, when we look at its context, the original meaning, and recipients are clear...

⁴The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, sends this message to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: ⁵"Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food you produce. ⁶Marry, and have children. Then find spouses for them, and have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! ⁷And work for the peace and prosperity of Babylon. Pray to the LORD for that city where you are held captive, for if Babylon has peace, so will you."

⁸The LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says, "Do not let the prophets and mediums who are there in Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams ⁹because they prophesy lies in my name. I have not sent them," says the LORD. ¹⁰"The truth is that you will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²In those days when you pray, I will listen. ¹³If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. ¹⁴I will be found by you," says the LORD. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and bring you home again to your own land."

Jeremiah 29:4-14 (NLT)

The view that Israel and the Church are different is clearly taught in the New Testament. Biblically speaking, the Church is completely different and distinct from Israel, and the two are never to be confused or used interchangeably. That said, because we, Gentile Christians have been 'grafted in' and are partakers of the Blessing of Abraham (Romans 12), I see nothing wrong with appropriating some of these promises to our lives personally. We preachers however, must always let the hearers know that we are in no way, Replacement Theologists, and that God's plan for Israel and the Jewish people still stands.

The Arab/Israeli Feud

⁴So Abram slept with Hagar, and she became pregnant. When Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress Sarai with contempt. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "It's all your fault! Now this servant of mine is pregnant, and she despises me, though I myself gave her the privilege of sleeping with you. The LORD will make you pay for doing this to me!"

⁶Abram replied, "Since she is your servant, you may deal with her as you see fit." So Sarai treated her harshly, and Hagar ran away.

⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a desert spring along the road to Shur. ⁸The angel said to her, "Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I am running away from my mistress," she replied.

⁹Then the angel of the LORD said, "Return to your mistress and submit to her authority." ¹⁰The angel added, "I will give you more descendants than you can count." ¹¹And the angel also said, "You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael, for the LORD

has heard about your misery. ¹²This son of yours will be a wild one—free and untamed as a wild donkey! He will be against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live at odds with the rest of his brothers.” **Genesis 16:4-12 (NLT)**

¹⁹But God replied, “Sarah, your wife, will bear you a son. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my everlasting covenant with him and his descendants. ²⁰As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will cause him to multiply and become a great nation. Twelve princes will be among his descendants. ²¹But my covenant is with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.” **Genesis 17:19-21 (NLT)**

Generally speaking the peoples of the Middle East surrounding Israel are descendants of Ishmael, Abraham’s firstborn son and Isaac’s half brother.

¹⁸Ishmael’s descendants were scattered across the country from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt in the direction of Asshur. The clans descended from Ishmael camped close to one another. **Genesis 25:18 (NLT)**

This is the area that we refer to as the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran).

Geographically, Israel is surrounded by enemies, from without and from within (inhabitants of the Gaza Strip and settlements within the West Bank).

Abraham’s attempt to fulfil God’s promise his own way has led to thousands of years of bitter conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. It needs to be said that most of the conflict has been on the side of Israel’s enemies, fuelled by fundamentalist Islamic belief and driven by Satanic forces.

When we receive the revelation that Israel is close to God’s heart, it is easy to unconsciously begin to harbour an anti-Arab attitude, which is in effect, racism.

¹²For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms. **Ephesians 6:12 (NLT)**

We must look past the people and understand who our real enemy is: Satan, who influences and manipulates the people,

God loves Arab people, and many are being saved, often at the expense of their livelihood, family, and safety. The following excerpt highlights the fact that while we need to pray for Israel’s peace, we ought not forget our Arab brothers and sisters in Christ.

Afghan Christians in exile are urging their fellow-Christians around the world to help stop the Afghan government from arresting and executing Afghan Christians. While international media and politicians are silent, within Afghanistan a dramatic anti-Christian furor has erupted, in which Afghan media and politicians alike are calling for the death of converts from Islam, in line with Islamic sharia law.

We do not know how the whole world and especially the Global Church is silent and closing their eyes while thousands of their brothers and sisters (Body of Christ) are in pain, facing life danger and death penalty and are tortured, persecuted and called criminals.⁵

Satan hates what God loves... What God loves, we should love

⁶For you are a holy people, who belong to the LORD your God. Of all the people on earth, the LORD your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure.

⁷The LORD did not choose you and lavish his love on you because you were larger or greater than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations! ⁸It was simply because the LORD loves you, and because he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. That is why the LORD rescued you with such amazing power from your slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt.

⁹Understand, therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and constantly loves those who love him and obey his commands. **Deuteronomy 7:6-9 (NLT)**

The physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are called the 'pupil of God's eye' (Zechariah 2:8), a term of endearment God uses for no other nation on earth. God didn't choose Israel because they were special; they are special because God chose them. It is easy to recognise what is close to God's heart by seeing what Satan despises, and even a blind person can plainly see Satan's hatred of the Jews.

As we grow in our relationship with God, His 'loves' will become our loves. Concerning the Jews, if we are truly close to God, our hearts will be drawn towards them. I would question any person's 'closeness to God' if they have an anti-Jewish attitude.

Anti Semitism and why Jews aren't that crazy about Christians

Continuing with this theme, let us address anti-Semitism.

The dictionary defines anti-Semitism as: prejudice against or hostility towards Jews, often rooted in hatred of their ethnic background, culture, and/or religion.

Anti-Semitism has been a satanically charged sentiment since the birth of Israel. The Old Testament records Sennacherib, king of Assyria and Haman official of Persia who both bitterly hated the Jews. Statements exhibiting prejudice against Jews and their religion can be found in the works of many pagan Greek and Roman writers. In Europe, during the Middle Ages persecution against Jews saw expulsions, forced conversions and massacres where thousands died. Less than a century ago, anti-Semitism culminated in the Holocaust, where 6 million Jews were mercilessly killed, for no other reason than the fact that they were Jewish.

As previously stated, Germany was considered by many, to be the most Christian Nation in the world at the time. Martin Luther, who's words and deeds birthed the Great Reformation, was also a zealous anti-Semite and his work 'On The Jews and their Lies' (published in 1543), is considered by many (including the late-leaders of the Nazi party) as being the inception for Nazism.

Below are just three paragraphs of the disgraceful book below...

Therefore be on your guard against the Jews, knowing that wherever they have their synagogues, nothing is found but a den of devils in which sheer self-glory, conceit, lies, blasphemy, and defaming of God and men are practiced most maliciously and vehemently with their eyes on them.

Moreover, they are nothing but thieves and robbers who daily eat no morsel and wear no thread of clothing which they have not stolen and pilfered from us by means of their accursed usury. Thus they live from day to day, together with wife and child, by theft and robbery, as arch-thieves and robbers, in the most impenitent security.

*They [rulers] must act like a good physician who, when gangrene has set in proceeds without mercy to cut, saw, and burn flesh, veins, bone, and marrow. Such a procedure must also be followed in this instance. Burn down their synagogues, forbid all that I enumerated earlier, force them to work, and deal harshly with them, as Moses did... If this does not help we must drive them out like mad dogs. **Martin Luther (On the Jews and Their Lies)***

We so often shake our heads at the hypocritical religious leaders of Jesus' time as they missed the boat completely and killed the Son of God. Are we any better than the Pharisees, when, in the name of the Son of God, believers in Jesus as Messiah killed millions of His children?

This is one of the main reasons why Jews aren't ecstatic about Christians. When a Jew thinks about Christianity, he/she automatically thinks of the thousands of years of mistreatment in the name of Christ.

It is so easy to proclaim the love of Jesus and argue why Jews should believe in Him as their Messiah, but in reality the only thing which is proving to be impacting Jewish people (religious and secular) is demonstrating Jesus' love toward them tangibly.

Sadly (understatement), anti-Semitism is rising its ugly head *again*, not even a lifetime after the Holocaust. Aged survivors of the Holocaust are living to see anti-Jew slogans defacing synagogues *again*. The unthinkable is happening *again*.

⁹*“The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?”*
Jeremiah 17:9a (NLT)

Jews returning to Israel

There is an overwhelming amount of prophecies in Bible foretelling Israel’s return (aliyah) to their God-given land.

Example 1: From the Nations.

²²*“Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the Sovereign LORD: I am bringing you back again but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, which you dishonored while you were scattered among the nations. ²³I will show how holy my great name is—the name you dishonored among the nations. And when I reveal my holiness through you before their very eyes, says the Sovereign LORD, then the nations will know that I am the LORD. ²⁴For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land.*

Ezekiel 36:22-23 (NLT)

Some people will say that the prophecies were fulfilled when the Jews returned to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon, but notice the verses say ‘nations’ plural, not ‘nation’ singular.

Example 2: Returning from the North.

¹⁶*“And when your land is once more filled with people,” says the LORD, “you will no longer wish for ‘the good old days’ when you possessed the Ark of the LORD’s covenant. Those days will not be missed or even thought about, and there will be no need to rebuild the Ark. ¹⁷In that day Jerusalem will be known as The Throne of the LORD. All nations will come there to honor the LORD. They will no longer stubbornly follow their own evil desires. ¹⁸In those days the people of Judah and Israel will return together from exile in the north. They will return to the land I gave their ancestors as an inheritance forever. **Jeremiah 3:16-18 (NLT)***

⁸*For I will bring them from the north and from the distant corners of the earth. I will not forget the blind and lame, the expectant mothers and women about to give birth. A great company will return! ⁹Tears of joy will stream down their faces, and I will lead them home with great care. They will walk beside quiet streams and not stumble. For I am Israel’s father, and Ephraim is my oldest child.*

¹⁰*“Listen to this message from the LORD, you nations of the world; proclaim it in distant coastlands: The LORD, who scattered his people, will gather them together and watch over them as a shepherd does his flock. **Jeremiah 31:8-10 (NLT)***

North of Israel is the Ukraine, from where hundreds of thousands of Jews have returned in recent years. Further north is Russia (almost directly north of Jerusalem is Moscow). Russia is quite literally the ‘North country’ spoken about by the prophets. In the last 20 years over 1 million Jews have made aliyah from Russia... ‘a great company’ in our lifetime, before our very eyes.

Example 3: A physical return, then a spiritual return.

¹*The LORD took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of the LORD to a valley filled with bones. ²He led me around among the old, dry bones that covered the valley floor. They were scattered everywhere across the ground. ³Then he asked me, “Son of man, can these bones become living people again?”*

“O Sovereign LORD,” I replied, “you alone know the answer to that.”

⁴*Then he said to me, “Speak to these bones and say, ‘Dry bones, listen to the word of the LORD!*

⁵*This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Look! I am going to breathe into you and make you live again! ⁶I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”*

⁷*So I spoke these words, just as he told me. Suddenly as I spoke, there was a rattling noise all across the valley. The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as they had been before. ⁸Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them.*

⁹Then he said to me, “Speak to the winds and say: ‘this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so that they may live again.’”

¹⁰So I spoke as he commanded me, and the wind entered the bodies, and they began to breathe. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army of them.

I believe we are living in verse 8 of Ezekiel’s vision. Jews from all nations are returning to their homeland in droves. Many don’t have any faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but feel compelled to return. In reality, God is drawing them home. The bones are becoming bodies, but bodies with no life.

¹¹Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, ‘We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone.’ ¹²Now give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the LORD. ¹⁴I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live and return home to your own land. Then you will know that I am the LORD. You will see that I have done everything just as I promised. I, the LORD, have spoken!” **Ezekiel 37:1-14 (NLT)**

“I will put my Spirit in you...” Israel will experience a national revival. God is going to do something absolutely phenomenal to an entire nation of people, and it is possible that we could see the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s vision in our lifetime. The physical return is happening; the spiritual return will follow.

Example 4: Fishermen and hunters

¹⁴“But the time is coming,” says the LORD, “when people who are taking an oath will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who rescued the people of Israel from the land of Egypt.’”

¹⁵Instead, they will say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the people of Israel back to their own land from the land of the north and from all the countries to which he had exiled them.’ For I will bring them back to this land that I gave their ancestors.

¹⁶“But now I am sending for many fishermen who will catch them,” says the LORD. “I am sending for hunters who will search for them in the forests and caves. **Jeremiah 16:14-16 (NLT)**

Many Bible scholars believe that the fishermen refer to people, ministries and organisations that are currently luring (for want of a better word) Jews back to their homeland (‘fishers of Jews’, much like the disciples were ‘fishers of men’). God is allowing a new wave of anti-Semitism to grow – where Jews from all Nations will feel as if they are hunted, and fleeing for their safety and security (God sending hunters), will return to Israel.

Israel and the End Times

Every time conflict in Israel makes headlines, some see it as a sure sign that the end of the world is imminent. This produces either hysteria (rooted in fear) in some, or a ‘boy who cried wolf’ reaction from others. The truth is that there has been conflict in and around Israel since it became a nation thousands of years ago! While we must be watchmen and understand the signs of the times, we must also be discerning and able to know the difference between hysteria, hearsay, heresy and the truth.

My water-tight, theologically and doctrinally correct philosophy of end times is simply this: Live as though Jesus will return tomorrow...

⁴⁴*You also must be ready all the time. For the Son of Man will come when least expected.*
Matthew 24:44 (NLT)

... but work as though Jesus won’t return for a hundred years.

¹¹While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. ¹²He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’ **Luke 19:11-13 (NIV)**

A great many books have been written about the sequence of End Time events and few agree with each other. There is one common denominator however... The Word of God. A wise pastor once said, “Say what

the Bible says and you can't go wrong". Below are just some references regarding Israel and events yet to come:

- **Antichrist and Israel:** *2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Daniel 9:20-27 (NLT)*
- **The invasion of Israel:** *Ezekiel 38 & 39*
- **Israel recognising Jesus as their Messiah:** *Zechariah 12 & 13*

Our attitude towards Jews

I have included Romans 11 in its entirety because it really doesn't need any explanation. It shows what our attitude should be towards Israel and the Jewish people in black and white and can't really be said any better.

We Christians tend to make things so complicated and frequently go to one extreme or the other. Many of us barely care about Israel; many have replaced Israel with the Church in their belief, and at the opposite side, many in their zeal for Israel place the burden of legal requirements from Moses Law on themselves wanting to please the God of Israel more. Where is the balance? Here in Romans 11.

¹*I ask, then, has God rejected his people, the Jews? Of course not! Remember that I myself am a Jew, a descendant of Abraham and a member of the tribe of Benjamin.*

²*No, God has not rejected his own people, whom he chose from the very beginning. Do you remember what the Scriptures say about this? Elijah the prophet complained to God about the people of Israel and said, ³"Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars. I alone am left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."*

⁴*And do you remember God's reply? He said, "You are not the only one left. I have seven thousand others who have never bowed down to Baal!"*

⁵*It is the same today, for not all the Jews have turned away from God. A few are being saved as a result of God's kindness in choosing them. ⁶And if they are saved by God's kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God's wonderful kindness would not be what it really is—free and undeserved.*

⁷*So this is the situation: Most of the Jews have not found the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly. A few have—the ones God has chosen—but the rest were made unresponsive.*

⁸*As the Scriptures say,*

"God has put them into a deep sleep.

To this very day he has shut their eyes so they do not see, and closed their ears so they do not hear."

⁹*David spoke of this same thing when he said,*

"Let their bountiful table become a snare, a trap that makes them think all is well.

Let their blessings cause them to stumble.

¹⁰*Let their eyes go blind so they cannot see,*

and let their backs grow weaker and weaker."

¹¹*Did God's people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course not! His purpose was to make his salvation available to the Gentiles, and then the Jews would be jealous and want it for themselves. ¹²Now if the Gentiles were enriched because the Jews turned down God's offer of salvation, think how much greater a blessing the world will share when the Jews finally accept it.*

¹³*I am saying all of this especially for you Gentiles. God has appointed me as the apostle to the Gentiles. I lay great stress on this, ¹⁴for I want to find a way to make the Jews want what you Gentiles have, and in that way I might save some of them. ¹⁵For since the Jews' rejection meant that God offered salvation to the rest of the world, how much more wonderful their acceptance will be. It will be life for those who were dead! ¹⁶And since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their children will also be holy. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too.*

¹⁷*But some of these branches from Abraham's tree, some of the Jews, have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were branches from a wild olive tree, were grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in God's rich nourishment of his special olive tree. ¹⁸But you must be careful not to brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. Remember, you are just a branch, not the root.*

¹⁹*"Well," you may say, "those branches were broken off to make room for me." ²⁰Yes, but remember—those branches, the Jews, were broken off because they didn't believe God, and*

you are there because you do believe. Don't think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. ²¹For if God did not spare the branches he put there in the first place, he won't spare you either.

²²Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe to those who disobeyed, but kind to you as you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off. ²³And if the Jews turn from their unbelief, God will graft them back into the tree again. He has the power to do it.

²⁴For if God was willing to take you who were, by nature, branches from a wild olive tree and graft you into his own good tree—a very unusual thing to do—he will be far more eager to graft the Jews back into the tree where they belong.

²⁵I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud and start bragging. Some of the Jews have hard hearts, but this will last only until the complete number of Gentiles comes to Christ. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved. Do you remember what the prophets said about this?

“A Deliverer will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel from all ungodliness.

²⁷And then I will keep my covenant with them and take away their sins.”

²⁸Many of the Jews are now enemies of the Good News. But this has been to your benefit, for God has given his gifts to you Gentiles. Yet the Jews are still his chosen people because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ²⁹For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn.

³⁰Once, you Gentiles were rebels against God, but when the Jews refused his mercy, God was merciful to you instead. ³¹And now, in the same way, the Jews are the rebels, and God's mercy has come to you. But someday they, too, will share in God's mercy. ³²For God has imprisoned all people in their own disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone.

³³Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods! ³⁴For who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who knows enough to be his counselor? ³⁵And who could ever give him so much that he would have to pay it back? ³⁶For everything comes from him; everything exists by his power and is intended for his glory. To him be glory evermore. Amen.

Romans 11 (NLT)

Conclusion

I trust this paper has answered some of the FAQs regarding Israel and the Jews. Again, it is only an overview of a massive subject (and much has been omitted because of length), but hopefully it has illuminated truth in the Word for you.

I look back over many years in Christian ministry and even though I've always known and believed that Israel and the Jews are important to God, have only this year understood firmly some of these basic truths concerning God's chosen people.

In conclusion, let us all heed the words of Moses as he addressed God's people millennia ago, still so applicable today for both Jew and Gentile.

¹²“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you? He requires you to fear him, to live according to his will, to love and worship him with all your heart and soul, ¹³and to obey the LORD's commands and laws that I am giving you today for your own good. ¹⁴The highest heavens and the earth and everything in it all belong to the LORD your God. ¹⁵Yet the LORD chose your ancestors as the objects of his love. And he chose you, their descendants, above every other nation, as is evident today. ¹⁶Therefore, cleanse your sinful hearts and stop being stubborn.

¹⁷“The LORD your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and takes no bribes. ¹⁸He gives justice to orphans and widows. He shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing.

¹⁹You, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. ²⁰You must fear the LORD your God and worship him and cling to him. Your oaths must be in his name alone. ²¹He is your God, the one who is worthy of your praise, the one who has done mighty miracles that you yourselves have seen. ²²When your ancestors went down into Egypt, there were only seventy of them. But now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky! **Deuteronomy 10:12-22 (NLT)**

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For further study:

God's Tsunami: Understanding Israel and End-time Prophecy, by Peter Tsukahira. [http:// www.gods-tsunami.com/](http://www.gods-tsunami.com/)

References:

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⁴ "On the Jews and Their Lies," Trans. Martin H. Bertram, in *Luther's Works* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], p. 265).

⁵ Open letter from a group of Afghan Christians in New Delhi, India on 9 June.(Barnabus Fund.org).