

ISRAEL



2. God's Purpose for Israel (2)

Introduction

In our previous study we saw briefly how Israel came into existence and what God's purposes for Israel are. It was God's desire that Israel be a light to the nations. Although Israel failed again and again, it has been fulfilled through the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter wrote, "There is salvation in no other name under Heaven." Multitudes have discovered Jesus as the light of the world and received salvation through him. Does this mean God's purposes for the Jewish nation are over? For centuries the church taught that they were. However this is not what the Word of God says.

1. Has God rejected Israel? Romans 11:1-15

- ✧ What two arguments does Paul give to prove that God still has a purpose for Israel? Romans 11:1-6, Romans 11:28-29
 - (1. *There will always be a remnant. Perhaps the majority have refused to believe Jesus is their Messiah, but God will always have some who do, just as he had a remnant in the time of Elijah. We also see this Romans 9:27*)
 2. *God's gifts and calling for Israel will never change, even though the majority do not believe. He will fulfil his purpose for Israel because of the promises he made to the Patriarchs.)*
- ✧ Why has God allowed this 'blindness' to come upon the Jewish people? Romans 11:8, 11, 15, 25
(*The reason God allowed this 'blindness' or 'hardening' is so Gentiles will have the opportunity to be saved and reconciled with God. God has been waiting for the 'full number' of Gentiles to come in, so we too can become his sons and daughters.*)
- ✧ What words and phrases in these verses show this hardening is only temporary? Romans 11:11, 23, 25

God allowed the Jewish people to harden their hearts so Gentiles would have the opportunity to come to know Christ. However God always had a remnant who believed, and he said a time would come when Israel would be saved. A third argument given by Paul shows that God still has a purpose for Israel. This is seen in the illustration of the olive tree.)

2. What does the olive tree teach us? Romans 11:16-24

- ✧ What does each part of the olive tree symbolize do you think? Look at the root, the wild branches, the natural branches that are cut off and the natural branches that are grafted on.
 - (1. *The root represents the Patriarchs. See Romans 9:5, 11:16.*)
 2. *The wild olive branches that are grafted on are the Gentiles who believe in Jesus.*
 3. *The natural olive branches that are cut off are the Jews who do not believe in Jesus.*
 4. *The natural branches that are grafted on are the Jews who finally come to Jesus.)*
- ✧ What is our relationship with the root or the Patriarchs? Romans 11:17-18
(*We share the sap that comes from the root, and it is the root that supports us. The root, or the Patriarchs, believed God, and were made righteous on the basis of their faith. God promised that through them all nations would be blessed, and the blessing we receive in Christ is the fulfilment of that promise.*)

- ✧ How does this picture show us that God can and will save Israel? Romans 11:23-24
(We are told that God is able to graft them in again if they believe. Nothing is impossible for him. It is easier to graft in a natural branch rather than a wild one.)
- ✧ What are God's purposes for Israel in the last days according to Romans 11:25-32?

3. How can we be part of God's plan?

- ✧ How can we be part of God's purposes according to Romans 11:11, 14? What can we do?
(We can live the Christian life in such a way that the Jewish people become envious! Also we should love Israel and pray for the salvation of the Jewish people.)
- ✧ What blessing will the salvation of Israel bring to the world? Romans 11:12, 15
(It will bring greater spiritual riches to the world and life from the dead.)

Conclusion

The Bible tells us that after the time given by God for the Gentiles to respond to the gospel, there will be another time for the Jewish people. This is part of God's marvellous plan of redemption for mankind, and we see it happening now.

As we see Jewish people coming to Jesus, it will usher in great blessing for mankind. The glory of God will be manifest among his people and it will prepare the way for the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead. Hallelujah! First, however, we are to love the Jewish people and pray for their salvation.