

* The Heights Baptist Church * Sermon Series: Doctrine *

* Topic: Israel * Various * 8/16/26 *

MAIN POINT

Israel is a nation descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This nation was chosen by God to be His people, to give them His Law, and to bless all nations through the Messiah, who would come from the line of Judah. Israel currently does not recognize their Messiah, but in the future, this blindness will be removed, and God will establish a new covenant with Israel.

INTRODUCTION

Whose fault do you think it was that Jesus went to the cross? The religious leaders of Israel, the Jewish crowds in Jerusalem at the time, Pilate, or someone else?

Jesus went to the cross voluntarily, as He had legions of angels standing by to rescue Him if he chose to call off what was happening to him (Matthew 26:53). He went to the cross because of our sin.

This lesson

Note to study leader: Here is the outline for today's lesson considering the question, "What is Israel?"

- A. *The Origin of Israel*
- B. *The History of Israel*
- C. *The Future of Israel*
- D. *The Present Condition of Israel*

Note to study leader: Plan ahead as to how much time you want to budget for each section of this lesson. There is a lot of information, so you may want to summarize the origin and history of Israel portions of this lesson to save adequate time to cover the present and future condition of Israel.

UNDERSTANDING

A. THE ORIGIN OF ISRAEL

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES

What do these verses tell us about how and why Israel became God's chosen people?

1. **Deut. 7:6-8:** God chose Israel, not because they were big or strong, but because He loves them, and because of His promise to their ancestors (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).
2. **Deut. 9:6:** God didn't choose Israel because of their righteousness, for they are a stiff-necked people.
3. **Isaiah 43:1 and 7; 20-21:** God chose Israel to glorify and praise Him.

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ GENESIS 12:1-4 AND GENESIS 15:1-10, 17-18

What do these verses tell us about God's covenant with Israel through Abram (Abraham)?

God promised to make Abram into a great nation, and that all nations would be blessed through him. His descendants would be as countless as the stars of heaven. God promised the land of Canaan to them. God confirmed this covenant with a cutting ceremony, in which animals would be cut in half, with both parties walking between the halves. This showed the parties were committed to fulfilling their part of the covenant, or meet the fate of the animals. It is significant that in this instance, only God passed between the pieces, showing this was an unconditional covenant.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GENESIS 12:1-3

What is the origin of the name "Israel", and what does it mean?

After this wrestling match, Jacob's name was changed to Israel. It is thought this was an encounter with the preincarnate Christ. This is because verse 28 says he struggled with God, and in verse 30, Jacob said he saw God face to face. It is notable that Jacob means "deceiver", and Israel means "He struggles with God." This new name is prophetic of the nation of Israel's relationship with God throughout history. In the future, Israel's name will be changed again to "Hephzibah", which means, "My delight is in her" (Isaiah 62:2-4).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DEUTERONOMY 10:1-17

What do these verses tell us about God's covenant with Israel given through Moses?

Unlike the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant was a conditional covenant. If Israel obeyed God's law, they would be blessed by God. If they disobeyed the covenant, they would be cursed by God.

B. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

Jacob's and his 12 sons moved to Egypt due to a famine. In Egypt, they were eventually enslaved, as they grew from a family into a nation of about 2 million people before returning to the promised land.

The nation of Israel has been bearing the consequences of rejecting the Mosaic covenant throughout history, having been trampled on by the Canaanites, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, and the Romans.

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ MATTHEW 23:1-12 AND MATTHEW 23:13-19

What transition was made at the time Israel rejected Jesus their Messiah?

The keys to the kingdom of Heaven were taken from Israel and given to the church, which would bear fruit.

C. THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

Old Testament Passage	Promise	New Testament Explanation of Fulfillment
Jeremiah 31:31–37	God will establish the new covenant with his chosen people in the future.	Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31 and says Christ currently mediates this better covenant. Hebrews 10 applies the promise directly to Christians: “The Holy Spirit also bears witness to us.” The new covenant was inaugurated by Christ’s blood and is already in effect. It awaits consummation, but not establishment. Hebrews 8:6–13:10:14–22
Isaiah 9:6–7	Jesus will begin reigning on David’s throne during a future millennium.	Luke 1 identifies Jesus as David’s promised king, while Acts 2 connects God’s promise to seat David’s descendant on his throne with Christ’s resurrection and heavenly enthronement. Christ reigns now, although His kingdom has not yet been consummated by his second coming. Luke 1:30–33 Acts 2:29–36
Isaiah 11:10–12	This primarily describes a future national regathering of God’s people.	Paul quotes Isaiah 11:10 in Romans 15 and applies it to the present inclusion of the Gentiles under Christ’s rule. There may be further consummation, but the prophecy has already begun to be fulfilled in Christ’s worldwide kingdom. Romans 15:8–12
Ezekiel 34	Israel will be nationally restored during the millennium.	Jesus presents Himself as Ezekiel’s promised shepherd. He gathers other sheep so that there is “one flock, one shepherd.” The New Testament applies this promise to Christ gathering His people, including Jews and Gentiles. John 10:11–18

Romans 11 provides the strongest biblical basis for expecting a future widespread conversion of ethnic Jews. I think that is a reasonable and likely interpretation of the partial hardening, the natural branches being grafted back in, and “all Israel will be saved.”

But Paul describes their restoration as:

- Being grafted back into the same olive tree.
- Turning from unbelief to faith.
- Receiving forgiveness through the Deliverer.
- Sharing the same covenant mercy already received by believing Gentiles.

There are not two trees, two saving covenants, or two ways of belonging to God. Jews who return are grafted back through faith in Christ. Romans 11 therefore supports hope for Jewish conversion without establishing a separate covenant.

Note to study leader: *More will be covered on the future of Israel and the Millennial reign of Christ in seven upcoming doctrine lessons on prophecy starting later this month.*

D. THE PRESENT CONDITION OF ISRAEL

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES

What do these verses tell us about the present condition of Israel?

- **Galatians 3:15:22:** The Mosaic covenant of Law did not nullify the Abrahamic Covenant of promise. God will fulfill his promise to Abraham.
- **Romans 11:25-36:** In regard to the gospel, Israel is our enemy, but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Their disobedience led to the salvation of the gentiles, and in the future, God will extend mercy to Israel as well.
- **Hosea 3:4-5:** For many days Israel will live without king or prince, without sacrifice or idolatry. This is the current state of Israel. The nation has not fallen back into the idolatry that plagued them in the past. And they don't have a king on Israel's throne or sacrifices as part of their worship.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ EZEKIEL 37

This is one of the most misinterpreted passages in the Bible. According to verse 11, who do these dry bones represent? How is this a picture of Israel?

It is a great to apply this to our lives (God can save even the worst of sinners), but the proper interpretation of these verses is the dry bones represent the people of Israel. These bones had been dead a long time. But God restores these bones. The first stage is, the bones gather together and flesh and skin is restored to them. In the second stage, breath enters them, they come to life and stand on their feet.

Jerusalem was destroyed by Rome in 70 AD, and the people of Israel were dispersed for about 2,000 years. Today, Israel has returned to the promised land, but they do not know their Messiah. About 1% of Israel is Christian, which is the same percentage as Buddhists living in America. This is represented by the flesh coming back on the bones, but with no life in them. We eagerly look forward to the day when Israel's spiritual blindness will be removed, and they enter into a new covenant relationship with God.

Note to study leader: *There is a doctrine held by some churches that Israel has been replaced by the church. This is known as "replacement theology", which basically says Israel has received the curses from the law for their disobedience to God, and the church is now receiving the blessings originally offered to Israel. This is also known as "supersessionism", or "fulfillment theology". The idea was popularized by Augustine based on the fact Israel crucified Jesus and was subsequently destroyed by Rome. This view spiritualizes away the plain reading of numerous prophecies about God's future restoration of Israel.*

APPLICATION

Consider reading and meditating on the doxology given in the verses we read in Romans 11:33-36 as part of your devotional time every day this week.

PRAYER

God, we praise you and thank you that you used the disobedience of Israel to provide a means of salvation for all of us through Christ's finished work on the cross. We thank you that Israel is still beloved on account of the patriarchs, and that one day you will extend your mercy to Israel just as you have with us.

***Note to study leader:** Since this lesson is comprised of individual passages from scripture rather than one large chunk of scripture, the usual Commentary section is not included in this lesson.*