

ESCHATOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

PART 36

ISRAEL IN THE LAND, PART 3

The concept that God is looking for a faithful generation of Jews for the fulfillment of His covenant promises to the Patriarchs is identified here. Even throughout the long period of time Israel has been unfaithful, God has not rejected them. God is going to be faithful to His covenant promises to Israel. The Messianic King is going to save the Jews from annihilation at the hands of antichrist and He is going to inaugurate the Messianic Kingdom at which time the Jewish people—all of them—will be living in the land of Israel. Numerous Scriptures reveal the gathering of the Jewish people into the land as faithful believers in their Messiah.

The Jews are going to be gathered from every place on planet earth and returned to Israel. The mention of all four directions is an indication of just how complete this is going to be. Every believing Jew will be relocated from wherever they have been dispersed around the world during the Tribulation and brought back to the land. In verse 7, God specifically says He created the Jewish people. As we have noted before, Israel is a nation that cannot be counted among all the other nations of the world. God is comforting the people through the prophet; He is giving them hope for the future. Obviously, the Jews first reading Isaiah's book lived over 2,500 years ago and the context concerns Babylon. However, with the declaration their offspring will be regathered from all over the world, this seems to have double reference both near and far. The return from Babylon was not a worldwide return; it was only a return from the north. Constable recognized this. "Return from Babylonian captivity would not be from the four compass points and so does not qualify as the complete fulfillment. He will do this when Jesus Christ returns to the earth. [Thomas L. Constable, *Constable's Notes on the Bible*, p. 4:120].

Isaiah 43:5–7⁵ "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west. ⁶"I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, ⁷Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

God is going to regather the Jews from all over the world and bring them into the land where they will worship Him on the holy mountain in Jerusalem. A great trumpet will announce this effort to bring the people back to the land. The great trumpet brings to mind the Lord's words in the Olivet Discourse when He said He will send His angels at the sound of a great trumpet to gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other (Mt. 24:31).

Isaiah 27:12–13 ¹²In that day the LORD will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel. ¹³It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

The regathering of the Jews and the reestablishment of Israel as a nation in belief will be such an astounding event the Exodus will pale in significance. “Jeremiah introduced God’s promise of future blessing for Israel with the phrase the days are coming. This is an eschatological formula the prophet frequently used to speak of events occurring in the distant future during the end times. Here the prophet is telling of a time, after Judah’s return from captivity in Babylon, when there would be a new ‘exodus.’ No longer would the people look back to the first exodus when God brought Israel out of Egypt. Ultimately, at the end of days, Israel as a nation would be restored to her land and would then enjoy God’s blessing.” [Charles Dyer with Eva Rydelnik, “Jeremiah” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, p. 1131].

Jeremiah 16:14–15 ¹⁴“Therefore behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when it will no longer be said, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ ¹⁵but, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.’ For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers.

Jeremiah once again confirmed the worldwide regathering of Israel from even the most remote parts of the earth. No Jewish person will be neglected or ignored; the crippled, the weak, the helpless, all of them will be gathered up by God and brought back. God said He is a father to Israel and like a father caring for his family, He will bring them back as a family. God is a faithful, covenant keeping God. The same God who promised Israel curses for disobedience with the ultimate act of discipline being dispersion from the land, will keep His promise to bring them back and restore them.

Jeremiah 31:7–10 ⁷For thus says the LORD, “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise and say, ‘O LORD, save Your people, The remnant of Israel.’ ⁸“Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; A great company, they will return here. ⁹“With weeping they will come, And by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, On a straight path in which they will not stumble; For I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.” ¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.”

As promised in the curses, God drove Israel out of the land in anger, wrath, and great indignation, but as promised in the Land Covenant, they will eventually turn to Him in

faith and be restored. When that happens, the faithful remnant of Israel will finally realize the full implementation of all the covenants.

Jeremiah 32:37–40 ³⁷“Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. ³⁸“They shall be My people, and I will be their God; ³⁹and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰“I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

The Scriptures present promise after promise God made to Israel to restore her to the land in belief after which the Jewish people will enjoy the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. That has yet to happen, but happen it will.

In addition to the promise to regather the people of Israel in belief, Ezekiel emphasized God's declaration of His divine protection of the Jewish people in the midst of all the persecutions during the dispersion. The preservation of the Jews has been a marvelous demonstration of God's grace and omnipotence. They have been forced into ghettos where they could easily be murdered and otherwise persecuted but also where they were preserved as a distinct ethnic group of people, God's people. They probably would have been fully assimilated into the peoples of the world centuries ago if they had been allowed free access to society wherein they could have intermarried. They were murdered by the Roman Catholic Church during the Crusades and during the Inquisition in Spain and the Russians have instituted numerous murderous pogroms against them. The Muslims have hated the Jews and have been murdering them since Mohammed, but through it all, God has preserved them as a distinct people, His specifically created people for His specifically designated purposes. Some of the Protestant Reformers do not have clean hands either when it comes to persecuting the Jewish people. Many Replacement theologians have written things about Israel and the Jews that are in varying degrees clearly anti-Semitic. In the normal course of human history, any nation experiencing what Israel has experienced would have resulted in their elimination as a people group. Any other people group would be just a footnote in the historical record. But they have a God who superintended their preservation. This is truly a miraculous situation. Charles Hodge presented some arguments on this subject that were common in his time making the case that Israel would be preserved and restored as a nation. Hodge didn't believe this, but there were people at the time who apparently had a good understanding of Scripture concerning the restoration of Israel. “A presumptive argument is drawn from the strange preservation of the Jews through so many centuries as a distinct people. They have often been compared to a river flowing through the ocean without mingling with its waters. There must be some purpose in this wonderful preservation. That people must have a future corresponding to its marvelous past. Reference is also made to the fact that the land promised to the Jews is now empty, as though waiting for their return. It once teemed with a population counted by

millions; and there is no reason why it may not in the future be as densely inhabited.” [Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, “Soteriology,” vol. 3, p. 3:808].

Ezekiel 11:14–18 ¹⁴Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹⁵“Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, your fellow exiles and the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, ‘Go far from the LORD; this land has been given us as a possession.’ ¹⁶“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone.”’ ¹⁷“Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.”’ ¹⁸“When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it.

The accomplishments of the Jewish people in the midst of all this persecution are also remarkable. They are truly blessed by God. Jews have amassed numerous Nobel Peace prizes in various profession fields including law, science, music, the arts, and so on. They are successful bankers and businessmen of all types. They are good citizens wherever they reside.

One of the hallmarks of the Messianic Kingdom will be the amazing productivity of the land. This will characterize the world, but Amos specifically related it to Israel. Hunger will not be a problem in the Kingdom; the production of food will not be an issue. The life of the Israelis will be characterized by peace and tranquility. “The blessings of the millennial Davidic kingdom include the restoration of the land.... Israel will return to the land and rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will enjoy security, abundant food, and blessings possible only in peacetime. Israel will put roots down in the promised land, never to leave it again. Nothing in Israel’s historical restoration after exile fulfilled the promises given here. These promises are yet to be fulfilled in the millennium when Jesus Christ, David’s descendent, rules from Jerusalem.” [John A. Jelinek, “Amos” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, p.1356].

Amos 9:14–15 ¹⁴“Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵“I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them,” Says the LORD your God.

Zechariah’s prophecy promising the regathering of Israel is particularly significant because he wrote it after the return from Babylon. That means he must be referring to another regathering; a regathering in belief; a regathering that is not the return from Babylon. In the preceding verses (vv. 6-7), the reunification of Israel and of Judah is predicted. This also negates any theology that claims this is only a restoration after the Babylonian captivity. The point is, when the faithful generation believes in the Messiah, God

will be faithful to fulfill His promises to Israel and restore them to the relationship with Him they were created to have.

Zechariah 10:8–12⁸“I will whistle for them to gather them together, For I have redeemed them; And they will be as numerous as they were before. ⁹“When I scatter them among the peoples, They will remember Me in far countries, And they with their children will live and come back. ¹⁰“I will bring them back from the land of Egypt And gather them from Assyria; And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon Until no room can be found for them. ¹¹“And they will pass through the sea of distress And He will strike the waves in the sea, So that all the depths of the Nile will dry up; And the pride of Assyria will be brought down And the scepter of Egypt will depart. ¹²“And I will strengthen them in the LORD, And in His name they will walk,” declares the LORD.

Understanding the timeline.

The Tribulation cannot begin until the seven-year covenant is made between antichrist and Israel. The covenant cannot be enacted with Israel unless the state of Israel exists; therefore, a Jewish state must exist before the Tribulation can begin. This fact makes the establishment of the Jewish state in unbelief an immensely important development in our time. Throughout history, people have imagined all sorts of ways to try and determine when these prophetic events were going to occur. Most of western civilization thought the Lord was going to come back in 1,000 A.D. Many people since have tried to set dates for His return. The Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses were born out of Miller's attempt to do this in the nineteenth century. Many dispensationalists have used current events to make end times predictions. The only event that has any bearing on these prophetic events is the reestablishment of Israel. Israel was not in place before but she is now and that is the only significant prophetic event that has certain meaning in our time. There are circumstances surrounding the current existence of Israel that are also significant, but their significance is inextricably linked with Israel's existence as a national entity. For example, it is significant that Israel is surrounded by Muslim nations that hate them and want to destroy both the nation and the Jewish people and it is significant that Russia and Persia are sticking their national noses into the mix but if Israel didn't exist, these things would be nonissues at this time. Therefore, we, that is many premillennial dispensationalists, think a lot of things going on in the world play into the end times scenario, but we can't be totally certain about that. We can be certain that Israel has been reestablished in unbelief and that is a prophetically significant event and we are certain about that because it has been revealed in the Word of God that it would one day take place.

Daniel 9:27²⁷“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Since there are only two regatherings (Is. 11:11-12), then it is significant that Israel is back in the land at this time. It is my belief, based on the Scriptures we've gone over in the last few lessons, that Israel will not be, cannot be, removed from the land before the Tribulation occurs. They will, however, be dispersed again at the midpoint of the Tribulation when the antichrist desecrates the Temple, an occasion Christ Jesus called the abomination of desolation. Before that time, it does not appear they can be removed from the land.

Matthew 24:15–22 ¹⁵“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. ¹⁷“Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. ¹⁸“Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. ¹⁹“But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰“But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. ²¹“For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. ²²“Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Revelation 13:14–15 ¹⁴And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. ¹⁵And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Jerusalem will be a stumbling stone and an object of the world's attention in the end times. This could not happen unless and until Israel is back in the land and back in Jerusalem. Even though Israel was back in the land in 1948, they were not back in Jerusalem until 1967. Israel cannot be removed from Jerusalem prior to the Tribulation despite all the efforts of the world, Islam, and the United Nations to do so.

Zechariah 12:2–3 ²“Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. ³“It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

Summary and conclusion.

There are only two worldwide dispersions of Israel and two subsequent regatherings of Israel back into the land. The first regathering is in unbelief and that is underway at this time. It will continue until the midpoint of the Tribulation when Israel will once again be dispersed when the antichrist desecrates the Temple and demands to be worshipped.

At the end of the Tribulation Christ will return when the Jewish people cry out to Him, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Matthew 23:39³⁹"For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

At Christ's return, the people will be gathered into the land in belief at which time the covenantal promises, the Abrahamic Covenant and its amplifying Land, Davidic, and New Covenants, will be completely fulfilled.

Israel cannot be completely removed from the land prior to the midpoint of the Tribulation when they will flee the antichrist. Israel's presence in the land today is prophetically significant; the Bible proclaims it again and again. Many of the end times prophecies cannot be fulfilled unless Israel is actually in the land. There can be no antichrist unless and until there is an Israel with whom he will sign a peace treaty.

Dr. Barbieri addressed the issue of whether or not Israel can be removed from the land prior to the Tribulation. "The tendency one must avoid when writing on prophesy is to become a prophet. This author does not know what is going to happen to the state of Israel in the immediate future. It could have many days of relative peace or be attacked at any time. However, it seems clear from biblical prophecies that there will be a Jewish nation in existence when the prophetic events detailed in the Scriptures begin. Therefore the nation as it is known today will probably survive in some form in order to fulfill the details of the biblical texts." [Louis A. Barbieri, Jr., "The Future for Israel in God's Plan" in *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*, p. 165].

The only way to maintain the truth of the Word of God is to interpret it according to a literal method of interpretation. When that method is used, it is clear that the church has not replaced Israel, that God is still working with Israel and the Jewish people, they are being restored to the land according to the Word of God in this age, and Israel will inherit all the covenant promises God made to them during the Millennial Kingdom when they are restored to the land in belief never to rebel against the Lord their God again.

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