

Israel and the Church

Romans 11:25-27

Introduction

As New Testament believers, we were formerly “excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise.” But in Christ, we have been brought near and declared to be fellow citizens. (*Ephesians 2:11-20*) While we now enjoy the benefits of belonging to God’s universal Church, it is important to understand that He has not forgotten about Israel. Paul reminds the early church not to be arrogant in light of Israel’s unbelief because God intends to draw them back to Himself. (*Romans 11:25-27*)

In order to understand God’s prophetic relationship with Israel, you must first understand that Israel, as the people of God, were the foundation for what God planned to accomplish through history. This began when God made a covenant with Abraham. God promised He was going to build up a nation that would act as His representative to the world. (*Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-16, 17:2-8*). He furthered His covenantal relationship with Israel through Moses and the Promised Land, the judges, and the kings. Israel would always retain its position as God’s people; however God’s relationship with them would be tied to their obedience. (*Deuteronomy 28-29*) If they obeyed, they would get the blessings of God’s Kingdom. If they disobeyed, they would lose those blessings and even be scattered around the world.

The Church formed due to the disobedience of Israel. They rejected their Messiah (*Matthew 23:37-38*) so God gave His Kingdom to another people. (*Luke 21:24*) God’s announcement to “build His Church,” in Matthew 16:18-19, came as an interruption into God’s prophetic program and an enticement for the Israelites to return to God.

Both, the Jew and the Gentile, Israel and the Church, will take part in the fulfillment of God’s future plan and the enjoyment of the New Covenant. (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*) Yet Israel’s connection to the New Covenant has been delayed; Romans 11:15-26 explains that God will continue His program with Israel after the full number of Gentiles comes into the fold.

Jesus told His disciples in John 14:1-3, that He was going to leave and come back in order to bring the church to Himself. It is after the church is raptured and during the tribulation period that God will again address the unbelief of Israel. The Church will be united with Christ in the end while God intends to keep His covenant with Israel by drawing them back to Himself.

Getting Started

1. Have you ever thought about your relation to Israel as a believer in Christ? According to the Scriptures, how are we alike and how are we different?
2. How can this understanding of Israel and the Church help you to better understand what is happening in the Middle East with the Nation of Israel?

Let’s Get Personal

1. How is your view of God affected by this prophetic program in which He controls events in our global history, as well as our personal history?
2. In this sermon, we have been reminded that the events to come, in any individual’s future - whether Jew or Gentile, are determined by our relationship with Jesus Christ. Are you certain where you stand in Christ? Have you put your faith in Christ alone? The future of the believer is assured upon belief (*Ephesians 1:13-14*). If you are not sure, is it due to your lack of understanding of salvation through faith? Or are you pressed by the guilt of habitual sin? Discuss this with your group.
3. According to Romans 11, why can’t we as the Church boast about our salvation in light of Israel’s unbelief?

Take the Next Step

1. As believers, we have been made a part of God’s Kingdom program. We now belong to the family of God, which enables us to call Him “Abba, Father” (*Romans 8:15*). How does this affect your desire to live for God and please Him in light of this fact? What can you do differently to remind yourself of your blessed position in Christ?
2. Want to dig deeper? Look at Daniel 9:24-27, Luke 21:24-27, Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Renew Your Mind

“...that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” Romans 11:25b