

Who Is Israel — and Who Cares?

A Study on God's Faithfulness to Israel and the Integrity of His Word

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Elk Point Baptist Church | Study Resource

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I. The Word of God — Our Authority

Whatever we believe about Israel must start with the Bible. We don't start with culture to interpret the Bible; we interpret culture through the Bible.

Every covenant, promise, and prophecy about Israel carries divine weight because **God cannot lie**. The moment we loosen our grip on biblical authority, we open the door to reinterpretation to deciding what God “must have meant.” That is where confusion begins.

Before we ask “Who is Israel?” we must settle “Who is speaking?” and the answer is God.

Literal or Figurative?

Define what we mean by literal interpretation: taking Scripture in its normal, grammatical, historical sense unless the context clearly indicates symbolism.

We do not reshape God's Word into our opinions. We let the Word shape us. Let us see what God says.

II. God's Covenant with Israel — God's Story Begins with a Promise

He called Abram out of Ur and said, "I will make of thee a great nation... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

I will make of thee a great nation... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Gen 12:1–3)

He confirmed that covenant with Isaac and Jacob (**Gen 13:15; 26:3–5; 28:13–15**) and later reaffirmed it through David, promising a throne and kingdom that would never end. This was a unilateral and unconditional covenant.

The prophets echoed that promise again and again. **Isa 9:6** declares:

For unto us a child is born literal fulfillment at Bethlehem. Unto us a son is given literal fulfillment at Calvary. And the government shall be upon his shoulder literal fulfillment still to come in His Kingdom.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel revealed both the judgment and mercy of God: dispersion and regathering.

Jer 16:14–15; 23:3–8; 24:6; 29:14; 30:3, 10–11; 31:35–37; Ezek 11:17; 20:34, 41–42; 28:25–26; 34:13; 36:24; 37:1–14.

Ezekiel saw a valley full of bones, lifeless, scattered, and dry. God told him to prophesy, and as he spoke, the bones began to rattle and come together. Sinews and flesh covered them, but still there was no breath in them. This is where they stand today, still awaiting the breath from heaven to bring them alive spiritually.

That breath will come when they look upon Him whom they have pierced.

And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. (Matt 2:6)

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt 19:28)

and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. (Acts 1:6–7)

Prophetic Context: Jesus names the season; Daniel charts its span and its kingdoms.

Daniel 2:31–45 Nebuchadnezzar's image maps the succession of Gentile empires until a stone cut without hands strikes, destroying the kingdoms and becoming a kingdom that shall never be destroyed.

Daniel 7:2–14 Four beasts depict Gentile rule until the Ancient of Days sits and there is given dominion and a kingdom to the Son of Man.

Daniel 9:24–27 The seventy weeks prophecy sets the timeline to Messiah and the final period of distress, culminating in Messiah’s victory and Israel’s restoration.

Table: The Unbroken Covenant Line

Covenant	Reference	Fulfillment Emphasis
Abrahamic	Gen 12:1–3; 13:15	Land, nation, blessing, unconditional
Isaac	Gen 26:3–5	Continuation of Abrahamic covenant
Jacob (Israel)	Gen 28:13–15	National identity and promise confirmed
Davidic	2 Sam 7:12–16	Eternal throne and kingdom
New Covenant	Jer 31:31–37	Spiritual renewal and national restoration
Fulfilled in Christ	Luke 1:32–33; Matt 19:28	Jesus as Son of David and eternal King

Table: Prophetic Timeline Through Israel’s Lens

Stage	Prophecy	Fulfillment/Status
Scattering	Deut 28; Ezek 12	Fulfilled (70 A.D.)
Preservation	Jer 30:10–11	Ongoing miracle
Regathering (in unbelief)	Ezek 36–37	Fulfilled (1948)
Tribulation	Dan 9:27; Rev 6–19	Future
Second Coming	Zech 14:3–4	Future
Kingdom Reign	Rev 20:4–6	Future
Spiritual Restoration	Ezek 37:9–14; Rom 11:26	Future fulfillment

Aren’t Christians “Spiritual Israel”? In one sense, yes, but not in the way Replacement Theology claims.

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (Gal 3:7)

And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:29)

We are spiritual heirs, not national substitutes. Every believer, Jew or Gentile, becomes part of the spiritual family that began with Abraham, a recipient of the same covenant grace. We have been grafted in but have not replaced the root. We partake of the promises of salvation and blessing, but we do not erase or absorb Israel’s national identity. We share in Israel’s spiritual blessings, but not her covenant position.

That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. (Gen 22:17)

I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. (Rom 11:1–2)

Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto

the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? (Rom 11:10–12)

For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? (Rom 11:24)

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved... (Rom 11:25–26a)

III. The Method of Interpretation

Literal or Figurative? How we read determines what we believe. Literal interpretation simply takes Scripture in its normal, grammatical, historical sense, unless the context clearly signals symbolism. When we read the Bible literally, we let God speak for Himself.

The first cracks appeared when Greek philosophy crept into early theology. Even before the canon closed, John was already confronting the rise of Gnosticism a philosophy that denied Christ’s incarnation and replaced revelation with speculation (**1 Jn 4:1–3**).

That mindset flourished through Augustine, who began reading prophecy as allegory. Out of that seed grew Roman Catholicism the first organized religion to put Replacement Theology into practice.

And what were the results? A church that claimed to be Israel but became a cruel earthly kingdom one that persecuted, killed, and did irreparable harm to the name of Christ. It built cathedrals but broke commandments, conquered nations but corrupted truth. History bears witness from inquisitions to expulsions, the Church of Rome persecuted both Christians and Jews for centuries.

“We are at fault in not slaying them... their synagogues should be set on fire, their homes broken down and destroyed, and their people driven from the land.” Martin Luther

With the reemergence of Reformed Theology, it is no surprise to see a rise in biblical misunderstanding.

Table: Literal vs Allegorical Interpretation

Doctrine	Literal View (Biblical)	Allegorical Distortion	Result
Israel	Distinct nation; future restoration	Church replaces Israel	Promises reassigned; prophecy blurred
Kingdom / Millennium	Future, earthly reign of Christ	Present spiritual rule	Hope redefined
Resurrection	Bodily resurrection	Spiritual metaphor	Empty theology
Miracles	Historical acts of God	Moral symbols	Loss of the miraculous
Scripture	Plain meaning governs	Hidden layers imposed	Interpreter over text

Vital Doctrines Perverted by the Metaphorical Approach

Doctrine	Result of Allegorical Corruption
Salvation	Salvation by sacrament, not by Savior
The Church	A kingdom on earth instead of a body awaiting the King
The Kingdom and Millennium	Hope postponed became hope redefined
The Resurrection	An empty theology, not an empty tomb
Scripture	Subjective truth replaced divine revelation
Israel	A faith without roots and promises without proof
Christ	A poetic Christ who saves no one

Table: The Progression of Gnosticism and Allegory (From Pagan Philosophy to Church Tradition)

Stage	Key Figures / Movements	Core Idea Introduced	Impact on Biblical Interpretation
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Pagan Greek Philosophy	Plato, Aristotle	Truth is abstract, hidden; material world inferior	Old Testament seeds of allegory
Gnosticism (1st–2nd Century)	Opposed by John, Paul, Irenaeus	Secret knowledge beyond Scripture; Revelation replaced	Revelation replaced by mystical symbolism
Alexandrian School	Philo; Origen	Bible has hidden meanings beneath literal	Formalized allegorical interpretation
Augustine	Augustine of Hippo	Allegory shaped theology	Institutionalized allegory; Israel spiritualized
Roman Catholicism	Councils and popes	Church as interpretive authority	Allegory justified papal supremacy and sac

IV. The Modern State of Israel

Is the Israel we see today God's covenant people? The short answer is yes and no.

Yes, in a national and providential sense: modern Israel exists because God keeps His promises. The same God who scattered His people among the nations has begun to regather them, just as He said He would. Their survival is not political coincidence; it is prophetic confirmation.

Israel's blindness is partial and temporary (Rom 11:25–27) and the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom 11:29).

But in the spiritual sense, the modern State of Israel is not walking in covenant fellowship with God. As a nation, they remain largely opposed to Christ, to the New Testament, and to biblical morality. We support Israel because God does, but we do not sanctify their unbelief. We love the people, but we do not excuse their rejection of the Messiah.

Yes, we stand with Israel, but that does not mean we endorse every decision, policy, or moral direction they take. It is our job to bless; it is God's job to judge. We bless what aligns with God's covenant, and we pray for what does not.

I am a patriot. I love America. I will stand with and support those who defend our country. But does that mean I approve of the millions of babies we have killed, the human trafficking we tolerate, and the immorality we export around the world? No. My love for my country does not blind me to its sin; it burdens me to pray for its repentance. And that is how we view Israel.

We support what God has promised. We stand where God stands. But we long for the day when that nation and every nation bows the knee to the true and living King, Jesus Christ.

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (Rom 9:4–5)

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. (John 4:22)

V. Why It Matters

If God keeps His promises to Israel, He will keep His promises to you.

When you study God's plan for Israel, you are not just studying prophecy; you are studying the faithfulness of God. Every covenant, every promise, every act of restoration is God's way of saying, You can trust Me.

God's dealings with Israel are living reminders. They prove that He finishes what He starts and keeps what He promises. If God could ever abandon Israel, how could we be sure He will not abandon us? But He has not, and He will not.

I will bless them that bless thee and I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. The same covenant-keeping God who called Abraham out of Ur calls you out of darkness.

What He promised Israel nationally, He fulfills in you personally. That is why His faithfulness is not just a theological truth; it is your daily anchor. If God kept His word for thousands of years to a wandering, rebellious nation, He will surely keep His word to you in your wilderness.

God's promises do not expire; His Word does not wear out. He is as faithful today as He was to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Paul. The covenant He made with Israel reminds us that His grace is not fragile; it is forever.

God's promises to Israel remind us that He does not just have a spiritual answer for man's soul. He has an ultimate answer for the whole world. The same Lord who redeems individuals will one day restore nations, renew creation, and reign in righteousness. His plan does not end at the cross; it culminates at the crown. What He began with Israel will end with the world made new. The Gospel is not just about saving sinners from sin; it is about rescuing creation from the curse.

Israel's story shows that God's plan has always been global. Through their fall came our salvation; through our mercy will come their restoration (**Rom 11:11, 31**). Only God could weave redemption through rejection. Only God could take a crucified Messiah and make Him the risen King of kings. The story of Israel proves that no human failure can frustrate divine faithfulness.

God used Israel to bring the Messiah. He is using the Church to bring the message. And one day, He will use that same nation to declare His glory to the world.

The covenant story is the Gospel story: God chose. Man rebelled. Christ redeemed. God restores.

If God keeps His promises to Israel, you can trust Him to keep His promises to you. That is why this matters.

We rejoice in a God who keeps His Word. We rest in His promises when the world feels unstable. We reflect His faithfulness in how we live and love others. And we reach out with the same mercy God extended to us.

When you understand God's plan for Israel, you begin to see the heart of God for you a God who does not forget, does not fail, and does not forsake. Because the God who keeps His covenant with Israel will keep every promise He has made to His children. He is faithful then, now, and forever.