

# **Where are we on God's Prophetic timeclock? Part 4 The times of the Gentiles**

## **Summary**

We often think of the Gospel as simply a message about personal salvation—believing in Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life. But what if we've been seeing only half the picture? This profound exploration of Luke 21:23-24 reveals that the Gospel is far more comprehensive than we've been taught. Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would be trampled by Gentiles 'until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled'—a prophetic timeline we're living in right now. The word 'until' carries enormous weight, indicating a period of waiting that will definitively end. What many of us don't realize is that for nearly 1,800 years, church doctrine has taught replacement theology—the idea that God rejected Israel and replaced them with the Church. This teaching has blinded us to a central truth: God's promises to Israel have never been revoked. The re-establishment of Israel in 1948 isn't a political footnote—it's a prophetic alarm bell signaling that we're approaching the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. The Messianic faith we've inherited is rooted in the belief that God will raise up a King from Judah to rule over Israel and the nations in righteousness, justice, joy, and peace. Through faith in Jesus, we Gentiles have been grafted into Israel's story, becoming fellow citizens in God's household. Understanding this doesn't diminish Jesus—it magnifies the scope of what He accomplished and what He will complete when He returns. We're called to love what God loves: His Son, His Spirit, His people Israel, His land, and His city Jerusalem—all equally and passionately.

## **Title: The Times of the Gentiles: Understanding Israel's Role in God's Redemptive Plan**

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores Jesus' prophetic declaration in Luke 21:24 about "the times of the Gentiles" and its significance for understanding God's complete redemptive plan. The pastor emphasizes that the gospel is not merely about individual salvation but encompasses God's covenant promises to Israel, the restoration of His kingdom on earth, and the gathering of all nations into one unified people under Messiah's reign. The message challenges traditional Christian theology that has replaced Israel with the Church, arguing instead that believers are grafted into Israel's promises through faith in Jesus Christ. The sermon traces God's unchanging faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, demonstrating through Scripture that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and 135 AD was not God's final word, but rather a temporary period leading to ultimate restoration when Jesus returns as King.

**Key Points:**

- The word "until" in Luke 21:24 indicates a period of waiting with a determined end, pointing to Jesus' return and Israel's final redemption
- The gospel includes not just personal salvation but corporate blessing—God creating a community to be His dwelling place forever
- From the second century onward, church fathers fell into theological error by teaching replacement theology—that God had permanently rejected Israel and replaced them with the Church
- This false doctrine has created 1,800 years of blindness in Christianity regarding Israel's central role in God's plans
- The Messianic faith is the belief that God will raise up from Judah an anointed king (Jesus) to rule over Israel and the nations, establishing a kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy, and peace
- The reestablishment of Israel as a nation in 1948 is a fulfillment of prophecy signaling that the times of the Gentiles are nearing their end
- Gentile believers are not replacing Israel but are being grafted into the commonwealth of Israel, becoming fellow citizens and members of God's household
- The kingdom of God has been growing like leaven since Jesus' resurrection—one Jew and one Gentile at a time
- God has never forgotten or forsaken Israel despite their scattering; He has been with them as "a little sanctuary" wherever they've gone
- Christians must love what God loves: Jesus, the Holy Spirit, AND Israel equally—they cannot be separated

**Scripture Reference:**

- Luke 21:23-24 (primary focus)
- Matthew 24 (parallel passage)
- Genesis 49:8-10 (Jacob's prophecy about Judah and Shiloh)

- Psalm 2:7-8 (God's promise to the Messiah)
- Isaiah 32 (the righteous king who will reign)
- Daniel 7 (the Son of Man receiving dominion)
- 1 Samuel 11:14-15 (establishment of Saul's kingdom)
- 2 Samuel 5:1-9 (David's kingdom and Jerusalem)
- 1 Kings 1:32-40 (Solomon's coronation)
- Ezekiel 37:21-28 (regathering and restoration of Israel)
- Ezekiel 11:16-20 (God as sanctuary for scattered Israel)
- Deuteronomy 11:11-12 (God's care for the land of Israel)
- Psalm 87:2 and 102:13 (God's love for Jerusalem)
- Isaiah 54:10 (God's unfailing love for Israel)
- Ephesians 1:3-14 (spiritual blessings and inheritance)
- Ephesians 2:19-22 (Gentiles as fellow citizens with Israel)
- Acts 1:6 (disciples asking about restoring the kingdom to Israel)

### **Stories:**

- The pastor's dream on Friday night about a heated conversation with a local congregation member who was passionately asking "What's the big deal about Israel?"—this dream prompted the emphasis on Israel in this particular message
- Historical account of the Jewish-Roman Wars (70 AD and 135 AD/Bar Kokhba Rebellion) when Rome brutally crushed Israel, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and scattered the Jewish people
- The parable Jesus told about the kingdom of God being like leaven hidden in three measures of meal until the whole lump is leavened (Matthew 13:33)—used to illustrate how God's kingdom has been growing invisibly but surely throughout history, one Jew and one Gentile at a time

## **Discussion Questions**

How does understanding the phrase 'until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled' change your perspective on current world events and Israel's role in God's plan?

In what ways has replacement theology affected your own understanding of Israel's place in Scripture, and how might correcting this view deepen your faith?

What does it mean for Christians today to be 'fellow citizens with the saints' and 'members of the household of God' alongside Israel, rather than replacing them?

How should the prophecy that Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles 'until' a specific time inform our prayers and expectations for the return of Jesus?

Why do you think the church fathers fell into the theological error of believing God had permanently rejected Israel, and what warnings does this offer us today?

How does recognizing that the gospel includes both personal salvation and the restoration of God's kingdom to Israel expand your understanding of the Great Commission?

What practical steps can believers take to love Israel, the land, and Jerusalem the way God loves them, without diminishing the centrality of Jesus?

How does the prophecy in Ezekiel 37 about God gathering Israel from the nations and giving them one heart relate to events we're witnessing in our generation?

Why is it significant that the disciples asked Jesus in Acts 1:6 about restoring the kingdom to Israel after His resurrection, and what does His response teach us?

In what ways does viewing the Messianic faith as rooted in the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob transform how we read both the Old and New Testaments?

# **Small Group Study Guide: The Times of the Gentiles**

## **Opening Prayer (5 minutes)**

Begin by asking God to open your eyes to understand His Word and His heart for Israel and the nations.

## **Introduction & Icebreaker (10 minutes)**

**\*\*Question:\*\*** Before this sermon, what was your understanding of Israel's role in God's plan? Has it changed?

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## **Key Scripture Focus**

**\*\*Luke 21:23-24\*\*** - "There will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive to all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

## **Discussion Questions (40-50 minutes)**

### **Part 1: Understanding the "Until"**

**\*\*Read Luke 21:23-24 together\*\***

1. What does the word "until" signify in this prophecy? Why is this significant for our understanding of God's plan?
2. How does this prophecy demonstrate both judgment AND hope?

## **Part 2: The Messianic Faith**

***\*\*Read Genesis 49:10 and Psalm 2:7-8\*\****

3. The sermon defined "Messianic faith" as belief that God will raise up an anointed man from Judah to rule over Israel and the nations in righteousness, justice, joy, and peace. How does this expand your understanding of the Gospel?
  
4. Why do you think this aspect of the Gospel has been neglected in much of Christian teaching?

## **Part 3: Israel's Centrality**

***\*\*Read Ephesians 2:11-22\*\****

5. The pastor stated we must have "equal and passionate, fervent love" for God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, AND Israel. Why might Christians struggle with including Israel in this list?
  
6. According to Ephesians 2:19, Gentile believers are "fellow citizens with the saints, members of the household of God." What household is Paul referring to? How does this change your identity as a believer?

## **Part 4: Church History & Replacement Theology**

7. The sermon mentioned that church fathers beginning in the 2nd century taught that God had replaced Israel with the Church. What are the dangers of this teaching?
  
8. How has this historical error affected the modern Church's understanding of:
  - End times prophecy?
  - Our relationship with Jewish people?
  - The significance of Israel becoming a nation in 1948?

## **Part 5: The Kingdom of God**

**\*\*Read Ezekiel 37:21-23\*\***

9. What does it mean that God is "setting the stage" in our generation for the restoration of the Kingdom of God to Israel?

10. The sermon emphasized that the Gospel isn't just about individual salvation but about God creating "a community of sanctified, spiritually alive people" as His dwelling place. How does this corporate understanding change how we view salvation and the Church?

### **Key Takeaways (10 minutes)**

**Have group members share which of these stood out most to them:**

1. **\*\*The Gospel is bigger than personal salvation\*\*** - It includes the restoration of God's Kingdom on earth through Israel and the Messiah.
2. **\*\*Israel has never been replaced\*\*** - Through Jesus, Gentiles are grafted INTO Israel's story, not replacing it.
3. **\*\*The word "until" matters\*\*** - The times of the Gentiles will end; God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled.
4. **\*\*We must discern the times\*\*** - The re-establishment of Israel in 1948 is prophetically significant.
5. **\*\*God's love for Israel equals His love for the Church\*\*** - We should share that same love.



6. **\*\*Jesus returns as King\*\*** - Not just to take us to heaven, but to establish God's Kingdom on earth with Israel at the center.

### **Practical Applications (15 minutes)**

#### *Personal Reflection*

- **\*\*This Week:\*\*** Read through one of the prophetic books (Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Zechariah) looking specifically for promises about Israel's restoration. Journal what you discover.

- **\*\*Prayer Focus:\*\*** Begin praying regularly for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6) and for Jewish people to recognize Yeshua as Messiah.

#### **Group Challenge**

- **\*\*Study Together:\*\*** Commit to reading the Old Testament prophets as a group over the next few months to understand God's promises to Israel.

- **\*\*Learn Church History:\*\*** Research one of the church fathers mentioned (Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Justin Martyr, Jerome, Origin, or Martin Luther) and their teachings about Israel. Share findings next week.

#### **Conversation Starters**

- **\*\*Ask Your Pastor:\*\*** "What does Acts 1:6 mean when the disciples ask Jesus, 'Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'"

- **\*\*Share with Others:\*\*** When discussing your faith, include not just personal salvation but God's plan to restore all things through the return of Jesus as King.

## **Deepening Understanding**

- **\*\*Memorize:\*\*** Ephesians 2:19 - "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."
- **\*\*Research:\*\*** Look into the historical events of 70 AD and 135 AD (the Jewish-Roman Wars and Bar Kokhba Rebellion) to understand the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy.

## **Closing Discussion (10 minutes)**

### **\*\*Final Questions:\*\***

1. What is one specific way your understanding of the Gospel has expanded through this teaching?
2. How will this affect the way you read the Bible going forward?
3. What questions do you still have that we can explore together?

## **Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**

Pray together:

- For revelation and understanding of God's Word
- For love for the Jewish people and Israel
- For the return of Yeshua and the establishment of God's Kingdom
- For discernment to understand the times we're living in
- That God would remove any blindness from the Church regarding Israel's role

## **For Next Week**

**\*\*Homework:\*\***

- Read Ezekiel 36-37 (the dry bones vision and prophecy of restoration)
- Write down any questions about how Israel and the Church relate
- Reflect on how this teaching challenges traditional views you may have held

**\*\*Come Prepared to Discuss:\*\***

- How does understanding Israel's role affect your view of end times?
- What practical ways can we show love and support for Israel and Jewish people?

**Additional Resources**

**\*\*Recommended Reading:\*\***

- Genesis 12:1-3 (Abrahamic Covenant)
- Romans 9-11 (Paul's teaching on Israel)
- Zechariah 12-14 (Prophecies of Israel's future)

**\*\*Key Terms to Understand:\*\***

- **\*\*Messianic Faith\*\*** - Faith centered on the promised Messiah who will rule from Israel

- **\*\*Replacement Theology\*\*** - The false teaching that the Church has replaced Israel

- **\*\*Times of the Gentiles\*\*** - The period when Gentile nations dominate Jerusalem and Israel

- **\*\*Kingdom of God\*\*** - God's rule and reign, historically through Israel, ultimately through Messiah

*\*Remember: The goal is not just knowledge, but transformation - that we would love what God loves and see the world through His eyes, with Israel central to His redemptive plan.\**

## **5-Day Devotional: The Times of the Gentiles and God's Faithfulness to Israel**

### **Day 1: Until - The Power of Divine Timing**

**\*\*Reading:\*\* Luke 21:20-24**

**\*\*Devotional:\*\***

The word "until" in Scripture marks a period of waiting and expectation for God's promise fulfillment. When Jesus prophesied Jerusalem's trampling "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," He wasn't announcing an ending—He was declaring a divine timeline. In your life, what are you waiting "until" for? God's "until" moments aren't periods of abandonment but seasons of preparation. The darkness Israel faced had a determined end, and so do your trials. God remains in complete control of history, working out His purposes even when circumstances appear bleak. Take comfort: your "until" has an appointed conclusion, and God's promises will not fail. What seems like delay is actually divine orchestration.

### **Day 2: The God-Centered Gospel**

**\*\*Reading:\*\* Genesis 49:8-10; Psalm 2:7-8**

**\*\*Devotional:\*\***

The biblical gospel is far more expansive than personal salvation alone. It encompasses God's plan to establish His kingdom on earth through Israel and the Messiah. From Jacob's prophecy about Judah to the psalmist's declaration of the Son's inheritance, Scripture reveals a God-centered, Israel-centered gospel. This isn't about diminishing Jesus—it's about seeing the full scope of His mission. He came first as the suffering servant to provide forgiveness, but He returns as the reigning King to establish righteousness and justice. Are you waiting merely to "die and go to heaven,"

or are you anticipating the restoration of all things? Expand your gospel understanding to include God's cosmic plan of redemption and restoration for Israel and the nations.

### **Day 3: God's Unfailing Love for Israel**

**\*\*Reading:\*\*** Isaiah 54:10; Deuteronomy 11:11-12

**\*\*Devotional:\*\***

God's love for Israel isn't diminished by their failures or His discipline. He declares, "My unfailing love for you will not be shaken." The land of Israel receives special attention—God's eyes are upon it continually. This isn't favoritism but faithfulness to covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understanding God's steadfast love for Israel helps us grasp His faithfulness to all His promises, including those made to us through Christ. If God has remained faithful to Israel through centuries of exile and suffering, how much more will He remain faithful to you? His covenant love never wavers. Let Israel's story strengthen your confidence in God's unchanging character and His commitment to complete what He begins.

### **Day 4: One Family, One Kingdom**

**\*\*Reading:\*\*** Ephesians 2:11-22

**\*\*Devotional:\*\***

Through Christ, Gentile believers aren't starting a new religion—we're being grafted into the existing family of God, the commonwealth of Israel. Paul makes this clear: we are "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." This isn't replacement but inclusion. The foundation remains "the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." Together, Jews and Gentiles who believe form one spiritual dwelling place for God. This truth should transform how we view Israel—not as irrelevant history, but as the root into which we've been grafted. Do you love what God loves? Can you celebrate God's faithfulness to Israel while rejoicing in your own inclusion? The gospel unites, never divides, God's people.

## **Day 5: The Messianic Hope Fulfilled**

**\*\*Reading:\*\* Ezekiel 37:15-23; Acts 1:6-8**

**\*\*Devotional:\*\***

The disciples' question—"Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"—wasn't misguided; it was premature. Jesus didn't correct their theology; He adjusted their timing. God's promise to regather Israel, cleanse them, give them one heart, and dwell among them forever is being fulfilled in our generation. Since 1948, the light of fulfilled prophecy has been shining, calling the church to discernment. The Messianic faith believes God will establish His kingdom on earth through the Messiah reigning over Israel and the nations. Are you living with this prophetic awareness? The return of Jewish people to their land isn't political coincidence—it's divine orchestration. Let this reality fill you with urgency for the gospel and anticipation for Christ's return as the Lion of Judah.