

FF Notes on Episode 16 – The Real Israel

Is it biblically significant that the nation of Israel exists? Is it a real work of God or just a secular/human thing that happened? Yes. You don't need to be a real expert in the end times to see that a lot of the action centers around Israel and Jerusalem. If the antichrist is going to commit the abomination of desolation in the temple—where's that? Jerusalem. If Jesus said, "let those in Judea flee...", where's that? All the OT prophets and their predictions are very Israel centric. Duh, they are Jewish prophets! Revelation mentions Jewish things and Jewish places throughout. This has led some to say, it's not about the church, that it's about God resuming his plan for Israel after the church age ends with the rapture. For example, this is the view of Bullinger's commentary. Yes, Revelation has many Jewish symbols and references to Israel, but it also has many references to Christ-followers. In the unfolding of God's end-times plans, the Church and Israel are interwoven—not separate.

For this episode, make sure you already watched Ep 9&10 covering Dispensationalism (D). **THE BIG ERROR IS THAT GOD MUST FINISH THE CHURCH AGE BEFORE RESUMING HIS PLAN AND DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL.** D is a theological system. It's not the Word of God. When you look at the Bible through the D system, it helps you understand. It was developed in the 1800's. FF believes we are in the church age between the 69th and 70th week. The mystery, revealed to Paul, is that the Gentiles are joint-heirs, in the joint-body, and joint-partakers in the inheritance. Eph 3 says that. The body of Christ is not Israel. But you can't prove from scripture that the church age must end with the rapture before the events of the 70th week. That's an unproven assumption made in D. It is very **unhelpful**. We need to put that assumption out of our mind and let the Word speak for itself. The reason this matters with the issues of Israel is because it can be used to tell the church that they must make a false choice when reading Revelation, Jesus's Olivet Discourse and the OT prophets. The false choice is that we must decide whether these speaking only about Israel and not the church. The proper way to read them is that the Church and Israel are interwoven in God's end-times plan. This false choice has caused many Christians to think, "well, I'm going to focus my study, teaching and practical living on the parts that are to me and pay a lot less, if any, attention to these sections that concern only Israel".

If the whole Bible from about Gen 12 – Rev is about Israel, does it make sense for Christians to feel so detached from Israel? God's plan of redemption comes through Israel and the redeeming of all us Gentiles is an add-on to redeeming Israel. It's interwoven, not separate! If you feel detached from God's desire and plan for Israel, and the age when our Lord Jesus reigns over his people, then how much is your heart joined to who your God and your Lord and Savior really are? Do you see the problem? Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, how I would gather you..." Paul said he wishes he could be accursed for Israel. He would give up his salvation, if they could have theirs. Maybe you've felt that way about one of your children, or your parents or a spouse. It's a very strong feeling. Do you have a strong feeling about God's salvation coming to Israel?

In the upcoming sessions, we will be covering the OT prophecies. Let's see them as interwoven with our redemption.

How should we view Israel?

1. The error of Supersessionism / Replacement Theology
 - a. After 70 AD, it was understandably hard to imagine actual fulfillment of Jews back in the land. They said it must be symbolic.
 - b. The Jews were obviously reactionary saying Jesus was not the real messiah.
 - c. The Jews were viewed as the Christ killers, people cursed by God.
 - d. Modern day version is that the church is the Israel of God, we are now the chosen. All God's promises to the Jews have passed to the church. The church is the real kingdom of God. If you believe in Christ, you are in the kingdom and you do kingdom work and have kingdom thinking. That's true in a sense, but the real deal for the kingdom is Jesus reigning over a restored earth from Mt. Zion. Most Christians think about spending eternity in heaven when they die or being raptured to be with Jesus in heaven. It is not biblically correct to emphasize being in heaven, instead of reigning with him on earth.

2. Is the present-day, secular nation of Israel biblically significant? Is the Jews being back in the land a real work of God or just a secular/human thing that happened? It is true that the ultimate, eschatological return to the land hasn't happened yet. Jer 31:31-40, Ezek 39:25-29.

Some Bible teachers say that Israel today is not the real Jews because there are prophecies that say God will miraculously bring them back and change their hearts. That's a misapplication of true scriptures. That does happen in the Millennial Kingdom, but the prophets also said they would return to the land (as they have now) and be invaded by the antichrist and many carried away as exiles. **Then**, God will bring them back and write the law in their hearts after antichrist's armies are wiped out.

Even worse is the idea expressed in a book called *The Thirteenth Tribe* and other writings. The idea is that most European Jews are not really of the original seed. They are descended from the Kazzars up between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea, who converted to Judaism, which is not real Judaism with temple sacrifices, just synagogue Judaism. Someone I spoke to recently brought up *The Thirteenth Tribe* and said that DNA evidence proves that people in Israel today came from there. Of course DNA evidence would show a connection to that area! The Assyrians conquered the 10 northern tribes and carried them off to that area of the Medes (2 Kings 18:11). The Kurds, who live in that area today consider themselves the descendants of the Medes. The 10 northern tribes intermarried and many came back to the area of Samaria.

The final regathering of Israel, with national repentance, with the law written in their hearts, hasn't happened yet. Is the current nation of Israel there now by the plan of God? The answer is yes. Ez 38:8-12, Mt 24:15-16. They are back in the land, not yet having accepted Messiah. How can the 70th Week begin with antichrist affirming a covenant with Israel, if there is no Israel? How can there be the abomination of desolation if there is no temple? How can they flee from Judea if they are not there? The stage is set! The rebuilding of the Temple will be an enormously important and that could happen very soon.

3. Antisemitism

In the first millennium of the Christian era, leaders in the European Christian (Catholic) hierarchy developed or solidified as doctrine ideas that: all Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Christ; the destruction of the Temple by the Romans and the scattering of the Jewish people was punishment both for past transgressions and for continued failure to abandon their faith and accept Christianity.—Holocaust Encyclopedia

The ancient hatred of the serpent against the seed, against God's chosen people is still at work. Think of how many times and in how many ways the devil has tried to wipe out Israel? Pharaoh in Egypt, the Amalekites, Haman in Esther, the inquisition in Spain, the Russians, the Nazis. Then think of a nation with no land of their own, keeping their language, keeping the scriptures, keeping their religious observance through all this for 1900 years. Think of how the remnant after the Holocaust fought and gained back their nation with the opposition of the British Empire and all the Arab nations! They have transformed the land, made the desert bloom, become way more prosperous than their Arab neighbors, fought two major wars against incredible odds! If you don't see the hand of God in that, then how will your eyes be open to see what God is doing to bring his plan to pass for the last days? God's Word comes to pass in earthy, human activities, seldom through cosmic, special effects miracles. Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger. Israel wandered in the desert 40 years. David was hunted by Saul as a criminal for years, then Saul died in battle. Did David look like a king? That is why there is so much at stake on what we think of the Jewish nation.

4. Zechariah 12:1-3. In the last days people's opinions on Israel and Jerusalem will be a sorting issue. Good guys vs. bad guys. People of God vs. antichrist. If you get this issue wrong, you will be among those who are deceived by the Antichrist. It's already a big issue internationally. Think how much attention the UN and the international community is focused on criticizing Israel about the west bank, the settlements, Gaza, treatment of the Palestinians, etc. Many churches are on the side of the Palestinians!

In Revelation, Jesus refers to a “synagogue of Satan” – Jews corrupting or opposing Christian teaching. This does not mean that God has written off all Jews. Jer 31:35-37 tells us that it is impossible for God to cast off Israel or for them to cease being a nation before him. It is utterly amazing that, for 1900 years, He kept that promise and now they are back in the land. Romans 11 tells us it is part of God’s plan for blindness, in part, to happen to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles come in.

All of this antisemitism is satanic-inspired. If you are under the influence of these, you need to repent and pray. If you have read “the Thirteenth Tribe” or similar things, and been influenced by them, it doesn’t mean you are deserving of condemnation. Think of all the commentaries and books of higher criticism that undermine the truth of the Bible. It is no coincidence that Daniel is probably the most criticized OT book. Now you need to put the Word on in your mind. Put on the mind of Christ. In Daniel 9, he is praying for the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah to come to pass. It wasn’t easy to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls and the temple. Read Nehemiah again. Then Judea’s history was to get stomped by one conqueror after another through the coming of Christ—yet Daniel prayed so earnestly for the Word of God to come to pass. If you love Christ, you love what he loves, you love his purposes. If you love the Father, you love what he loves. If you don’t, how well do you know him? If you need to grow in maturity and understand, FF will help point you to things in the Word of God that need to be deep in your heart and in your world view. Imagine if you are not on board with what Jesus Christ is doing and wants to do, how pleased can he be with you? If this fits you, then get on your knees and repent and pray God to give you a better understanding.

Abomination of Desolation means there is a temple and God considers it holy. Daniel 9, 12, Matt 24, 2 Thess 2.

So, there is a coming back of Israel in the land in an un-restored state (Ezek 36-39) . That is what we have now. There will be a devastatingly successful invasion by antichrist (Zech 12, 14, Matt 24, Dan 12). Why would his conquests and battles be centered on Jerusalem if the church has already been raptured in a pre-trib rapture and a “fake” Israel occupies the land? Why would it be an “abomination of desolation” for him to defile the temple if it is not real or holy?

Messiah comes to the rescue. Time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer 30:7). Most of the prophet spoke of this. It is the day of the LORD. The LORD God pours out His fury on Israel and a remnant repent (Zech 12:4-12). They accept their Messiah as their king. Israel is fully restored, and the law is written in their hearts and God never removes His blessing from them again (Jer 30:8 – 31:41).

There will be more details on scriptures that cover this end-times invasion of Israel in future episodes.

Summary

- For centuries it was almost impossible to imagine the prophecies literally coming to pass
- Now, the stage is set. Israel is back in the land but has not yet turned to the LORD their God and accepted Messiah
- The Temple will be rebuilt first. Look for that and be ready!
- There will be a devastating successful invasion of Israel
- This corresponds to the events right after the abomination of desolation at the midpoint of the final seven years. Also, the 5th seal.
- The remnant will repent and turn to Messiah. They will be delivered with a mighty hand.
- No scriptural proof that the rapture must occur before the 70th Week. The end-times destiny of Israel and the Church are not separate—they are interwoven.