

“ISRAELOLOGY”

You get Israel right when you apply the proper principles of interpretation, taking the Scriptures for what they plainly say. You get Israel right when you get the OT covenants and promises right. And when you get Israel right, you are well on the path to getting God right. God has largely bound the revelation of Himself to the context of the nation of Israel.

Note that **Israelology** has the word ISRAEL in it. Israelology has everything to do with the subject of Israel.

When you think of Israel, what do you think of? You probably think of the Holy Land – the special land of promise that God gave to the Jews. You may think of the land of the prophets where the Scriptures were given. You perhaps think of the place where Jesus was born, ministered, died, rose again, and the place to which He will one day return.

Definition of Israelology

The suffix “ology” refers to the study of something. For example, the word **theology** refers to the study of God. In systematic theology books, you will find the study of salvation under “soteriology”; the study of the church under “ecclesiology”; the study of future things under “eschatology”, etc.

But almost never do we find the subject of ISRAELOLOGY in a systematic theology book. Almost never do we find ISRAELOLOGY addressed in a doctrinal statement. Why not? This omission is so glaring that ISRAELOLOGY has been called “***The Missing Link in Systematic Theology***”.

Israelology is simply **the study of Israel**. It is a major theme in the Scriptures; and as such, is worthy of our attention. We need to consider the BIG PICTURE of Israel and see what the Bible teaches about Israel and why it is important.

Israel is a Major Theme in the Scriptures

Israel is a major theme in all the Word of God. From Genesis 12 on, in the OT, Israel is the focal point. In the gospels, the thrust is Jewish. Prophecy swirls around the two hubs of Israel and her Messiah. In the book of Acts, the Gospel goes first to the Jew and then to the Gentile (cf. Acts 1:8, Rom. 1:16). In the epistles, Israel is set aside but not forsaken (cf. Rom. 9-11). In the book of Revelation, the Church is first addressed in chapters 1-3, but

then the bulk of the book that follows is largely Jewish in orientation (cf. Rev. 7:4-8, 11, 12).

God identifies Himself with no other specific nation in a special way like He does with the nation of Israel. To Israel God says in Amos 3:2, ***“You only have I known of all the families of the earth”***. God is called “the God of Israel” 203 times in the Bible; 28 times, “the God of Jacob”; 17 times, “the God of Abraham”; and 13 times, “the God of Isaac”. Never is God called the God of any other ethnic group other than Israel.

The term **Israel** appears over 2,000 times in the OT and 73 times in the NT. It always refers to either the people or the land that is united to YHWH in special covenant relationship (cf. Gen. 32:28). Judaism has what it considers its own “Trinity”; namely: the Torah (the law of God), the land of Israel, and the people of Israel. The people and the land are considered linked like soul and body.

Three Clarifications:

- 1) Israel is distinct from the Church (cf. 1 Cor. 10:32).
- 2) God is not finished with His people Israel (cf. Rom. 9-11).
- 3) In background, the Church is made up primarily of Gentiles and a remnant of Jews, forming a unique organism called “the body of Christ” or “the bride of Christ” (cf. Eph. 2:19-22, 4:4; Rev. 19:7-9).

Four Nuances of the “seed of Abraham”:

- 1) The biological descendants of Abraham (cf. Gen. 17:5-6, 20).
 - 2) The Messiah (cf. Matt. 1:1, Gal. 3:16).
 - 3) The righteous remnant in Israel (cf. Isa. 41:8, Rom. 9:6-7).
 - 4) The spiritual descendants who share in “like-faith” with Abraham (cf. Rom. 4:11-12; Gal. 3:29).
- Context determines the proper sense in which to take it.

In terms of special revelation God has largely revealed Himself through the Jews. The Scriptures came through the Jews. The Covenants were given to the Jews. The Messiah came through the Jews. God has forever linked Himself in special covenant relationship to the Jews. His very faithfulness is LINKED to what happens to the Jews.

Psalm 41:13 (NKJV)

13 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting!
Amen and Amen.

