

WHY ISRAEL MATTERS – PART TWO

There are FOUR KEY reasons why Israel matters.

- 1) Israel matters because God has chosen Israel; 2) Unfaithful Israel serves to demonstrate God's impeccable faithfulness; 3) Israel is uniquely God's channel of blessing; and 4) God's reputation is forever tied to Israel.

I have previously dealt with reasons number one and two – now I address reasons three and four.

3. Israel is uniquely God's channel of blessing

a. Revelation

Outside of “natural revelation” (cf. Ps. 19:1-6), God has essentially revealed Himself through “special revelation” in conjunction with the nation of Israel (cf. Ps. 19:7-14). What we know of God in a personal way – we know in connection to Israel. The Bible is God's inspired book (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16); but in terms of transmission, it is essentially a “**Jewish book**” transmitted largely through the Jewish prophets and apostles.

Deuteronomy 4:33–35 (NKJV)

33 Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live?

34 Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.

God uniquely revealed Himself to Israel so that they might know Him. God's revelation to Israel is what made her so great (cf. Deut. 5:24-26).

Deuteronomy 4:6–8 (NKJV)

6 Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this **great** nation is a wise and understanding people.’

7 “For what **great** nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?”

8 And what **great** nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?”

Only Israel knew GREATNESS in this sense. Other nations, like the United States or Great Britain, might call themselves great, but the Scriptures only refer to Israel as GREAT. And, Israel was only in a position of GREATNESS because of the revelation she received from God.

Amos 3:7 says, ***“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.”*** The prophets were essentially all Jewish. God has revealed Himself and His plan of redemption through the nation of Israel.

Paul, in Romans 9, says that it was to the Israelites that the covenants, the giving of the Law, and the promises were given (cf. Rom. 9:4).

Revelation to the Church in the NT builds on the revelation given to the Jews in the OT. But, that is the point – Israel is the root, and we are merely grafted in.

As Paul says in Romans 11:18, we as the Gentile Church ***“do not support the root, but the root supports you.”*** We tap into the Jewish tree of revelation. We are *“grafted in, but grateful”*.

b. Prophecy

Isaiah 43:10 (NKJV)

10 “You are **My witnesses**,” says the Lord, “And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me.

In context, God appoints Israel to be His witness to the accuracy of His prophecies. It is this glory to predict the future and to bring it to pass in regard to Israel that God will not share with any other, as seen in Isa. 42:8-9.

Thus, the God of the Bible presents the nation of Israel and the Jewish people as His evidence that He is the One True God. God pre-writes history (prophecy) about Israel, and then He brings it to pass. He tells the future about Israel; and then in history, we see the fulfillment of these prophecies. This is what God has uniquely done with the nation of Israel (cf. Isa. 43:9, 12, 44:25-26).

For example, God prophesied that He would uproot His people Israel from the land, that He would preserve them at the furthest ends of the earth, and then He would restore them back to the Land of Promise in the latter days.

Never in the annals of human history has a people ever been totally uprooted from its land, dispersed across the entire world for nearly 2,000 years, survived intact, and then returned to its country of origin to once again resume its national existence. But, this has uniquely happened to Israel in perfect accord with prophecy (cf. Deut. 30:3-5, Jer. 30:3-11, 31:7-8, Ezek. 11:17, 36-39). Scripture indicates that Israel had to once again be reinstated as a nation; first in unbelief, in order for Last Days' prophecy to come to fruition.

This unparalleled phenomenon has baffled the world. The re-emergence of Israel cannot be fully explained or understood apart from the Bible. Isa. 44:23 says that God has ***“glorified Himself in Israel”***.

After explaining at length that He has chosen Israel and what He is going to do with Israel, in Isa. 46:13 God refers to Israel as ***“My glory”***. It is uniquely through the nation of Israel that God reveals Himself and brings glory to Himself – especially in relation to prophecy. Last Days' prophecy largely revolves around the nation of Israel.

c. Messiah/Salvation

God's ultimate revelation is seen in His Son. John 1:11 says, ***“He came to His own”*** but sadly, ***“His own did not receive Him.”*** Heb. 1:1-2 explains that God in the past spoke in various ways to the Jewish forefathers by the prophets, but now in these last days He has spoken to them by His Son. Jesus forthrightly said that ***“salvation is of the Jews”*** (cf. Jn. 4:22). Jesus was sent ***“to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”*** (cf. Mt. 15:24), and initially He sent His apostles only to the house of Israel (cf. Mt. 10:6).

The Messiah in the OT is definitively presented as a Jewish Messiah. It is the Branch of David that will be King Who will be called ***“THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”*** (cf. Jer. 23:5-6). God will set His King on the holy hill of Zion (cf. Ps. 2:6). According to Lk. 1:32-33, the Messiah will sit on the throne of David and ***“reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”***

The gospel is ***“for the Jew first”*** and then for the Gentile (cf. Rom. 1:16). The Great Commission applies first to Jerusalem, then to the rest of Israel, and then to the further parts of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8). Paul, on his missionary journeys, consistently went first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

God's intention all along was that Israel be a channel of blessing to the entire world. She was, is, and will be. Israel is the main channel of God's blessing, but not exclusively the recipient. God's blessing through Israel also extends to the entire world – especially in and through the Messiah (cf. Isa. 49:3, 6, 44:23, Lk. 2:32).

In the Abrahamic Covenant – out of which flows all the blessings of God, we see provision for the blessing of all the families of the earth (cf. Gen. 12:3). Thus, through Israel the entire world would be blessed. Again, the root is Israel which supports us.

Even now, God is still working on the Jews to bring them back to the primary position where they will once again be the head and not the tail (cf. Deut. 28:13). But, they must first come to repentance (cf. Acts 3:19-21). God's blessing of salvation has come to the Gentiles in part so that they might be used to provoke the Jews to jealousy (cf. Rom. 10:19, 11:11, 14). In Romans 11:15, Paul indicates that the eventual restoration of Israel will mean all the more blessing for the world of the Gentiles.

Romans 11:17 (NKJV)

17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were **grafted in among them**, and with them became a **partaker of** the root and fatness of the olive tree,

Romans 15:27 (NKJV)

27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been **partakers of their spiritual things**, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.

Salvation is of the Jews (cf. Jn. 4:22). The prophets, Messiah, apostles, and gospel truth all tie back to the Jews. The Gentiles partake of the spiritual "blessing" found in the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Gen. 12:3), which is amplified in the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 8:8-12, 10:16-17). The Gentiles owe much to the Jews in terms of spiritual heritage. We are "partakers of their spiritual things" (cf. Rom. 11:17).

4. God's Reputation is forever tied to Israel

After the Exodus when Israel sinned grievously, Moses (in Exodus 32) appealed to God on the basis of His reputation before the nations. Moses argued that if God would allow Israel to perish, it would reflect badly on Him before the Egyptians, and he also appealed to God on the basis of His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. Ex. 32:12-13).

Over and over in the OT, the refrain is brought out that YHWH (the covenant God of Israel) is the One Who brought Israel out of Egypt – the land of bondage (cf. Ex. 12:17, 13:3, 20:2, Ps. 81:10, Hos. 13:4).

Ezekiel 36:20–21 (NKJV)

20 When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they **profaned My holy name**—when they said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have **gone out of His land.**’

21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had **profaned** among the nations wherever they went.

Wherever the Jews were scattered in the world, they caused God’s Name/reputation to be profaned. To be profaned means that it was defiled or treated with no respect. It means that they treated the Person of God as common or as nothing special.

The dispersion of the Jews among the nations had the effect of making God look bad. It was bad for God’s reputation. The Gentiles linked the fate of a people with the nature of their god. They reasoned that if YHWH – the covenant-keeping God of Israel was really powerful, then this would not be happening to them. If He was really a faithful, loving, and forgiving God, then this would not be happening to them. And so, God’s Name got dragged through the mud wherever the Jews went.

God’s Name was profaned because of God’s covenant attachment with Israel. Their exile made God look bad in the eyes of the nations (cf. 2 Kg. 18:32-35, 19:10-12). But in the Last Days, God is going to once again go about to restore His reputation as the God of Israel. In those days, He is going to once again supernaturally intervene on behalf of Israel in the war of Gog and Magog, recorded in Ezekiel 38-39.

Ezekiel 39:7 (NKJV)

7 So I will **make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel,** and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the **nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.**

How significant is Israel? Well, Israel is God’s chosen nation; it demonstrates the faithful character of God; it is a channel of blessing for the entire world; and it uniquely brings God glory. How could it not matter more?