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War in Israel—A Biblical Perspective, Pt 4

Selected Passages

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: In this series we explore the biblical theology behind the attack by Hamas upon Israel and answer the question of why it matters. Why is Israel so important in the flow of human events? How should we view Israel? Why do so many in the Church seem to dismiss the nation of Israel? Should we? All of this is driven by certain theological convictions of which most are unaware of. This is a rather technical series that seeks to explain and answer the whole issue of Israel and the Church.

I. Introduction.

- A. Today we pick back up on considering Israel in light of the war with Hamas.
- B. To understand the war we had to understand how Israel came into being.
 - 1. We saw that Abraham and Sarah tried to fix things on their own and instead of trusting God to provide a son, they did it a different way.
 - 2. Ishmael was born to Hagar, Sarah's servant, and out of Ishmael came the Arab nations who were promised by God to be like wild donkeys—a euphemism for being difficult to be around.
 - 3. And at the core, that is the problem in Israel right now. The Palestinians are simply part of the result of Abraham's foolish choice that carried incredibly long-term consequences that are still in effect today.
- C. Today we will focus to whom does the term "Israel" refer?
 - 1. The task is not real hard IF we simply look at the biblical text. The vast majority of passages in the New Testament are obviously speaking to ethnic, physical Israel and Jews.
 - 2. In reality the idea that the Church = Israel is a theological argument more than a biblical one. But when you look at the biblical references used to argue for this idea, there are not that many and the bulk of them don't actually make the point, unless you have already accepted the theological system first.

II. What makes you an Israelite?

- A. To whom does the term "Israel" refer?

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1. The simplest answer is that Israel means Israel. To be Israel means you are Jewish.
 2. A bit more complex of an answer is that to understand that the bible will treat the individual Jew/Israelite differently than when it addresses the corporate nation of Israel.
 - a. An example of this is in Judges 2:11-19.

 - b. Another example is Daniel.

 - c. Now we have a new king, Jehoichin (8). Like his father he too was wicked and so God again bring Babylon up to be the rod of discipline.

 - d. In each of these we have examples of how you should keep a distinction in your mind about individuals and the whole. God can bless an individual while not blessing the whole and the other way around. So the bulk of Israel was in rejection, but not every person.
- B. There are a few passages commonly used to make the Church replace Israel.
1. Do not get caught up in the debate about “replacement” versus “supercedes” vs “fulfillment.” It is really a red herring designed to deflect focus off of the real issue.

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- a. For some the argument will center on a faithful remnant of Israel.

 - b. There are only a handful of New Testament passages that are commonly used to argue for a two-tier Israel, one that includes Gentiles. I want to look at the two most common ones to see what is actually stated versus what is often theologically assumed.
2. Romans 2:24-29.
 - a. What makes you a Jew? Or, more importantly, what makes you are Jew who receives the blessings of the promises made to Israel throughout the Old Testament?
 - (1) John 3.

 - (2) Matthew 3.

 - (3) A physical connection to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not all that is involved.

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- b. Paul has just finished giving a very frightening warning to all who sin. It is clear in vss. 11-16 that no person can hope to escape the judgment of God.

- c. Now in verses 17-24 there is this long list of privileges of being born as a Jew.

- d. Then Paul moves into a stinging indictment where he gives us the main idea of this section.
 - (1) In verse 23, “You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?”
 - (2) In Romans 1:18ff we saw that all of the Gentile world was guilty before God because though all know of God they will not honor Him as God, nor given thanks to Him.
 - (3) Now Paul makes the same charge to the people called “Jew.”

 - (4) verses 19-20 that these privileges did come with responsibility. There are four specific responsibilities:
 - (a) First, they were a guide to the blind.
 - (b) Second, they were a light to those in darkness.
 - (c) Third, they were a corrector of the foolish.
 - (d) Fourth, they were a teacher of the immature.

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- (5) But in vs 22-23 he simply shows that though they have these privileges, they do not practice them because they simply do not truly love and trust in God alone.
 - e. He starts out by making a critical statement, (read vs 25).
3. What does this mean?
4. Simply that to have the name “Jew” or to have the circumcision that shows that you are a Jew only is of genuine, saving value if you are a keeper of the Law.
5. But if the one who calls himself a Jew is a law-breaker, then simply put, he is really just like a Gentile.
6. Then he moves to the Gentile in verses 26-27.

7. And now Paul goes to the heart of the issue, literally.
 - a. He shows in verse 28 that the externals have no saving value.

 - b. And this is exactly what we see taught in verse 29.
 - c. Does this mean there is nothing for the physical Jew? No.

8. Romans 9:6.
 - a. At issue is whether God’s promises (“the word of God) failed? What promises? Those given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (the Fathers). Very important to remember who are the fathers/patriarchs mentioned in vs 5.
 - b. So what is Paul saying here in vs 6?
 - c. To be descended from Israel is not the same as being Israel. Meaning, it doesn’t just come via a birthright; rather, like he has

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said all the way through Romans so far, it comes through faith in the God who promises.

- d. So a question: who is Israel in the first mention and who is Israel in the second? Because these are not the same thing.

- e. Why? vss 15–18.

III. Conclusion.

- A. So all of this answers one other question. What happens to those Israelites who die in sin? And the answer is simple, they die in their sin and are under the wrath of God just like any Gentile who dies in sin.
- B. This does not make God's promises go away or change or evolve into something different.
 - 1. Israel as a nation is still the recipients of all of the blessings and promises the bible makes for her.
 - 2. But this does not mean that every single Israelite will be saved simply because they are Jewish.
 - 3. Like all things, it all comes down to Jesus Christ. Do you entrust your soul and your salvation to only the person and work of Jesus? Do you see Him alone as Lord and follow Him?
 - 4. That alone is what will bring you forgiveness and life.

Benediction

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing the good news of Jesus Christ, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen