

Is God Finished With Israel?

Is God finished with Israel? Is He done with the Jewish people as a people? Heaven forbid. All of Scripture and history shouts a loud “No” to this question.

Paul addressed this directly, asking, “So I ask, did they [speaking of the Jewish people as a whole] stumble in order that they might fall? By no means!” (Rom. 11:11). Or, in the words of the King James Version, “God forbid.”

So, despite Israel’s rejection of Jesus as Messiah, Israel has not fallen beyond the point of recovery. Rather, as Paul writes in Romans 9:4 (speaking, again, of non-believing Jews), “They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.”

Notice carefully those words, all in the present tense in Greek: The divine promises still belong to Israel. And one of those promises is that, whatever Israel does as a nation, even falling under divine discipline, God will preserve them as a nation.

As written in Jeremiah 31:35-37, “Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirs up the sea so that the waves roar, the Lord of Hosts is His name: If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the Lord: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the Lord.”

That’s why the Jewish people still exist today: We have been miraculously preserved by God, not because of our goodness, but because of His goodness. Thank God that He keeps His

promises! Thank God for His grace and mercy and longsuffering! (To all of my non-Jewish, Jesus-loving friends, remember: The church does not have a monopoly on grace.)

What about the fact that the vast majority of Jews do not believe in Jesus? What about the fact that some militantly oppose faith in Jesus?

That is tragic, and that is why Paul mourned in Romans 9:1-3. Jews without Jesus are lost, just as Gentiles without Jesus are lost (see Rom. 2:6-11).

Yet, despite my people's rejection of our Messiah, we remain loved and chosen by God. As Paul stated so clearly, "As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:28-29).

Some would argue that when Paul said "Israel" in these verses, he meant only the believing remnant, the Israel within Israel, Jews who believe in Jesus (see Rom. 9:6-8). But to argue for this is to do violence to the Word of God.

First, after making this point about the Israel within Israel (the believing remnant) in Romans 9:6, Paul used the word "Israel" 10 more times, culminating in Romans 11:26. In every case, he meant the nation as a whole, not just the believing remnant.

Second, as New Testament scholar F.F. Bruce pointed out in his commentary to Romans 11:26, "It is impossible to entertain an exegesis which takes 'Israel' here in a different sense from 'Israel' in v 25 ('blindness in part is happened to Israel')." In other words, the Israel that has been temporarily blinded is the Israel that will be saved.

As Bruce explained, "Temporarily alienated for the advantage of the Gentiles, they are eternally the object of God's

electing love because His promises, once made to the patriarchs, will never be revoked.”

That’s why Jesus spoke about the time of future “regeneration,” with the 12 tribes of Israel playing a central role (Matthew 19:28).

That’s why Peter spoke about the time of the restoration of all things, in accordance with the words of the Old Testament prophets (see Acts 3:19-21).

And what did those prophets speak about? They spoke of the time when the Messiah would reign from Jerusalem, when Israel would be exalted, and when the nations would stream to Jerusalem to learn from Israel’s God (see, for example, Isa. 2:1-4).

The idea that a New Testament writer could reverse all these promises with a single stroke of his pen—as some claim Paul or others did—is to deny the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament. After all, Jesus the Messiah came to fulfill the Hebrew Scriptures, not abolish them (see Matt. 5:17-20). He came to confirm the promises to the patriarchs, not cancel them (see Rom. 15:8-9).

And, as Paul also wrote, the Sinai covenant, which came 430 years after the promises to Abraham, cannot annul those promises (Gal. 3:17-18; this includes the promises to the Land of Israel; see also Ps. 105:7-11).

That alone explains the history of the Jewish people. Without a homeland for many centuries, scattered around the earth, yet preserved through generations of unspeakable suffering, only to be regathered to our ancient homeland. Nothing even remotely close to this has happened to any other people. It is only because of the Lord!

And so, both history and Scripture demolish the idea that God is finished with Israel. Not a chance!

(For those wanting to do further study, I recommend the following titles: Brock David Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the 'Not Yet' of Bible Prophecy*; Gerald R. McDermott, ed., *The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel and the Land*; by the same author, *Israel Matters: Why Christians Must Think Differently about the People and the Land*; Barry E. Horner, *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged and Eternal Israel*; Michael Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel*; David Harwood, *For the Sake of the Fathers: A New Testament View of God's Love for the Jewish People*; Michael L. Brown, *Our Hands Are Stained With Blood: The Tragic Story of the 'Church' and the Jewish People*.)