

## **“WILL ALL ISRAEL BE SAVED?”**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church**

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**Scripture Texts: Romans 11:25-32**

### **Introduction.**

The Middle East is in the news all the time. Since the creation of the nation state of Israel 1947 by the United Nations after WWII there has been constant tension and strife. In fact the day after Israel declared itself a Jewish state, the armies of four Arab countries attacked. A month doesn't go by without some news about Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel holds a special fascination for Christians and a special place in our hearts. Our history and heritage is bound up in Israel, our spiritual roots are there.

Many Christians love to take trips to the Holy Land, to be where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived, where David and Solomon reigned, where Jesus, Peter and Paul walked. Blaine and Ardelle are there now.

But Christians also have very mixed views about Israel and the Jews and God's plans and purposes for them.

### **Romans 11:25**

So what will happen to Israel in the end? Our text is no doubt one of the most important texts in all of Scripture concerning the Jews and their future.

**Romans 11:25-26** I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way *all Israel will be saved*.

Most interpreters of the end times believe Jews will be gathered in. Where they differ is how they will be gathered?

God began His redemptive work on earth through the chosen people, the nation of Israel. Eventually the Jewish nation fell into apostasy and rejected the Messiah and the Gospel. The olive tree was rotten so God cut off many of the branches and has been grafting in wild olive branches, the Gentiles.

When the last wild olive branch is grafted in then God is going to graft the original branches back into the original olive tree.

## **Romans 11:26, Will all Israel be saved? When?**

### *What does all Israel mean?*

It means salvation will come to the nation as a whole, to ethnic Israel, the Jewish people, the whole ethnic group. Not necessarily every single individual, but the nation as a whole.

### *By whom?*

By the deliverer who will come from Zion (Romans 11:26).

### *Who is the deliverer?*

**I Thessalonians 1:10** wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

So salvation comes to Jews and Gentiles in exactly the same way and only one way, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Jews don't get a special path or a special pass. They aren't the exception to the rule.

### *How will Jesus do it?*

By banishing or removing all ungodliness from Jacob (from Israel) and by forgiving their sins, at which time they will be grafted back into their own olive tree (Romans 11:24).

In verse 25 we see that from the time of Christ to the present and into the future the nation of Israel, meaning Jews, have received a partial hardening of heart from the hand of God so that there will be a great ingathering of Gentiles grafted into the olive tree. You and I are the beneficiaries of this hardening and of this engraving. It is by the mercy of God.

Once the full number of Gentiles is gathered in at the climax of world missions, when the Gospel has been preached to all nations, to all ethnic groups, or all people groups, then God will remove the hardening. He will remove the veil, remove the scales from their eyes and take away their hearts of stone.

All of this will reveal the great mercy and the glory of God.

**Romans 11:12** Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

**Romans 11:15** For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

**Romans 11:30-32** For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. 32 For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

All Israel will be saved.

But there are many Christians who don't believe this. Some hold to *replacement theology* which says "God has uprooted and eternally cast aside the olive tree which is Israel and has planted, in its place, an entirely new one, the Church. All the promises given to the former have been transferred to the latter" (Sam Storms).

Others believe what is called *two covenant theology* which says the Jews will be saved under their old covenant and Christians are saved under the new covenant, two different covenants, two different works of God. They deny the necessity of faith in Jesus for salvation for Jews.

Israel and the church represent two different and separate plans of God. They say that in the future there will be a great blessing on Israel and they will reign on the new earth, which the future blessing on the church will be to reign in the new heaven.

They accuse Christians who try to convert Jews to Christianity of anti-Semitism. The irony is that to not preach the Gospel to Jews is anti-Semitic, it is lack of love and care and concern for their souls.

Regarding replacement theology Romans is clear, God is not completely done with Israel. Regarding two covenant theology Romans is clear, there is only one olive tree, only one deliverer, only one people of God.

Jewish Christians, Arab Christians, Protestant Christians and Catholic Christians are all members of the same household of faith, the family of Abraham, the one body of Christ. We are all the covenant children of God, having the new covenant in Christ.

**I Peter 2:9-10** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

"Neither believing Jew nor believing Gentile has any advantage over the other. When it comes to inheriting the promises, which is inclusive of the "land", they are co-heirs. Indeed, when it comes to inheriting the promises, ethnicity is irrelevant. The only relevant factor is one's relationship to Jesus Christ by faith" (Sam Storms).

Romans is clear about something else. Not only is salvation only through Jesus Christ, but there will be a great salvation among the Jews in the end before Christ returns.

This is the promise made in Romans 11:25-27.

### ***When will this happen?***

We are not given details, but close to or at the time of the Second Coming of Jesus. As Jesus said:

**Matthew 23:39** I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

### ***Why will God do this?***

There is no question the Jewish people are a unique people in the world. No people are loved or hated more. No people have more enemies, no people have been more persecuted. They are unique in Scripture. Paul sums them up well in Romans 9.

**Romans 9:4-5** They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. 5 To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

God entrusted to them the first revelation of Himself. Israel has a place in God's heart and a purpose in God's plan.

**Romans 11:28-29** As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, *they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers*. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Some day they will be saved and grafted back into their own olive tree and all the branches will be saved.

But mark this, it will be by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. As Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the light. No one comes to the Father but by me." There is no other way, there is no other salvation.

### **What about Israel today?**

How should we think about Israel today? How's side should we be on? What about the Arab-Palestinian crisis? How are we to think about peace and justice in that part of the world?

Both the Jews and the Arabs, the descendants of Isaac and of Ishmael lay claim to the land. Those claims go back four thousand years and raise emotions like it was four years ago.

So what about it, does Israel have a right to that land today?

It is argued that God made a promise to Abraham that this land would belong to Israel forever.

**Genesis 17:7-8** God says to Abraham, “I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. 8 And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, *for an everlasting possession*, and I will be their God.”

**Genesis 48:3-4** “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4 and said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you and . . . will give this land to your offspring after you for *an everlasting possession*.’”

But to whom was that promise made? To Israel in the flesh or Israel in the spirit, to physical Israel or spiritual Israel, to disobedient, unbelieving Israel, or faithful, believing Israel?

The covenant promises of God come with blessings and curses, promises for good and promises for evil. So we read:

**Deuteronomy 28:63** And as the Lord took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you. And you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

Israel lost that right when they rejected the Messiah despite His clear demonstration of His power and authority. Israel is not a covenant keeping people or nation. They have rebelled and rejected God’s Son. God rejected Israel because Israel rejected the Gospel.

The nation of Israel today has the same rights as any other nation to exist and protect its borders. But Israel no longer has a God-given right or spiritual right to the land.

Remember Jesus’ parable of the tenants who killed the landlord’s son. What did Jesus say?

**Matthew 21:43** Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.

**Matthew 8:11-12** I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12 while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

This is why Paul says in verse 28, the Jews are enemies of God, they are enemies of the Gospel.

So neither Israel or Palestine has any special spiritual right to the land today. They lost their special divine right. We can only strive for peace through fair and just means.

Christians must be careful not to take sides or to be overly prejudiced one way or the other. Sympathy for Israel must never trump injustices against Arabs. Terrible crimes have been committed on both sides. We must not compromise truth or justice or morality.

We cannot say, Israel right or wrong. We can only support Israel to the extent that the Bible allows and what morality requires.

As for the future, one day all that land and all the new earth and new heavens will be occupied territory by Jewish and Christian believers, by the new people of God, co-heirs by grace of the new kingdom of God.

Our support for Israel should not be above our support for the body of Christ including Jewish Christians and Arab Christians who are our brothers and sisters in Christ and closer to us than any blood relatives who are not Christians and closer to us than non-believing Israel.

As for peace in the Middle East, there will be no peace apart from Jesus Christ.

**John 14:27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.

**Ephesians 2:13-18** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

### **Implications and applications.**

**Romans 11:11-12** Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as *to make Israel jealous*. 12 Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

So we can have confidence when we pray for world missions that God has a great plan to bring in a great Gentile harvest. He has number, a great company of the elect. World mission cannot and will not fail because God is using it to build His kingdom.

And we can pray for this great gathering that it will make the Jews jealous and desire the same treasures that are ours in our Messiah, Jesus Christ. We can pray that God will lift the hardening and hasten the day when the Jews are gathered as well. May god hasten the day, come quickly Lord Jesus.