



And So All Israel Shall Be Saved

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According to the UN, the world population topped 8 billion in November 2022. The Jewish Agency for Israel, headquartered in Jerusalem, Israel, estimates that in 2023 the world's Jewish population is about 15.7 million. That's up from 15.6 million in the previous year.

Despite many persecutions, the Jewish people continue to exist, maintaining their culture and religion, and are increasing in number. But what lies in store for them in the future? We know from Scripture what God has planned for those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, but what does the Bible have to say about the Jews? After all, in Zechariah 2:8 God refers to the Jewish people as *the apple of his eye*:

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

Some believe and teach that God wrote off *the apple of his eye* when the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah, calling for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified instead. In Matthew 27:20-25 we read:

²⁰But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. ²¹The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. ²²Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. ²³And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. ²⁴When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. ²⁵Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

Because of this, some have concluded that God has rejected the Jewish people and that all His promises to them have been given over to the church. We call this idea Supersessionism or Replacement

Theology. Replacement Theology teaches that the church has replaced or superseded Israel in all of God's plans and prophecies, nationally, ethnically, and spiritually. In other words, the Jewish people have gone from being the apple of God's eye, to being a rotten apple cast aside.

Of course, not all the promises and prophecies made to Israel can be directly or exactly fulfilled literally by Christians. For that reason, those who hold to Replacement Theology are forced to spiritualize or allegorize them in order for the church to fully replace Israel in all things. The real descendants of Abraham become the Christians not the Jews, the millennial reign of Christ on earth becomes symbolic of either the reign of Jesus in believers' hearts or the reign of Jesus Christ in the hearts of Believers, and so forth.

But what does the Bible say?

Well, in Romans 11:1-3, Paul writes:

¹I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ²God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, ³Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

Notice the question Paul poses: *Hath God cast away his people?* His twofold answer could not be clearer:

(1) God forbid.

(2) God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.

In fact, several verses later, in Romans 11:25-27, after discussing how Israel would be cut off for a time but later restored, Paul tells us:

²⁵For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. ²⁶And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: ²⁷For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Notice how Paul states that the *blindness* is *in part*, that is, not complete. This means that not all Jewish people are immune to the gospel but that some, such as Paul himself, would be saved. For this reason, we encourage people to pray for the Jewish people and reach out to them with the gospel.

However, we are warned that, despite the fact many Jews have and do come to a saving knowledge of Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour, many are still blinded to the truth. This blindness was pointed out several verses earlier, in verses 7-10, where he wrote:

⁷What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded ⁸(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. ⁹And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: ¹⁰Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

Nevertheless, Paul tells us in Romans 11:26-27 that there is a time coming where *all Israel shall be saved*:

²⁶And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: ²⁷For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Now, some would argue that Israel being saved is a reference to Believers who are referred to as Jews in Romans 2:28-29:

²⁸For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: ²⁹But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

However, in Romans 11:28, Paul makes it clear that he is referring to the Jewish people and not Believers when he writes, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." After all, it is Jews who reject Jesus Christ as the Messiah who are enemies of the gospel, as Paul was before his conversion, not those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

A similar reference to Israel's national blindness is made in 2 Corinthians 3:12-16:

¹²Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: ¹³And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: ¹⁴But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. ¹⁵But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. ¹⁶Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

So, what about Paul's statement that *all Israel shall be saved*? What will be the cause or catalyst for taking away the veil upon their hearts and dispelling their blindness? Well, to answer those questions we need to turn back to the Old Testament.

In Zechariah, chapters 12-14, God delivers the prophet Zechariah a detailed account of the last days, specifically regarding the end of the seven-year Tribulation period. These three chapters provide a detailed account of the events leading up to the battle of Armageddon and return of Jesus Christ (think of these chapters as an extended commentary on Revelation 19:11-21).

Notice what Zechariah writes in 12:10:

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

The prophet is clearly stating that the Spirit of God will move upon the Jewish people, causing them to realize that Jesus, the *one whom they have pierced*, is truly the Messiah; the one whom their forefathers rejected when they cried out, *Let him be crucified, and His blood be on us, and on our children*. This is when the veil shall be taken away, their eyes opened to see the truth, and *all Israel shall be saved*. But they also mourn when it appears that they realize the magnitude of the error of both themselves and their forefathers for having previously rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah and even having been enemies of the gospel.

He continues in Zechariah 13:1-2:

¹In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. ²And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.

However, the Bible tells us that some Jews will become Believers before the end of the Tribulation, just as some are being saved today. In fact, Revelation 7:1-8 and 14:1-5 inform us that 144,000 Jewish men, 12,000 out of each of the 12 tribes, will embrace Jesus as their Messiah and be specially sealed and anointed for His service earlier in the Tribulation. And, presumably, many of the multitudes who come to Christ during the Tribulation will be Jews as well. After all, Revelation 7:9-10 says:

⁹After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; ¹⁰And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Now, on the face of this, it seems we could say, why worry about evangelizing the Jewish people? After all, if eventually all Israel will be saved, then why not just ignore them and let God take care of them during the Tribulation? Well, other than the clear command of Jesus in passages such as Luke 24:46-47

where He says, "...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem", there is another very sobering reason to preach the gospel to the Jews and to all peoples now, before the Tribulation.

In Zechariah 13:7-9, God reveals the awful cost to those Jews who enter into the Tribulation:

⁷Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. ⁸And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. ⁹And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

Notice what God says here. Two thirds of the Jewish people alive at the beginning of the Tribulation will be dead by the end of the Tribulation. Or, to put it another way, if the Tribulation were to begin today, nearly 10 and a half million Jews would die over the next seven years, leaving just over 5 million to survive the Tribulation and embrace Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Messiah. They will die due to war, famine, diseases and natural disasters of unprecedented magnitude as the wrath of God is poured out onto a world that has rejected Him. Additionally, Revelation chapter 12 indicates that the Devil will stir up tremendous persecution against the Jews when his access to heaven is cut off and he knows that his time is short. Their suffering, according to the Bible, will be nearly unbearable, prompting Jesus to say in Matthew 24:22:

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

And, if we can use the Jews as an index of those non-Jews who will die during the Tribulation, we can see that the amount of suffering and death during the Tribulation is almost beyond imagination. If two thirds of the world population were to perish during the Tribulation, that means that if the Tribulation were to begin today, more than 5 billion people would die in the next seven years, leaving just over 2 and a half billion who survive to the end. Now that is truly staggering.

Yes, by the end of the Tribulation all Israel shall be saved, as well as multitudes of non-Jews. But the death and suffering they will have to endure suggests that waiting for the Tribulation to get saved is a very unwise decision. Rather than put off putting your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour until you see if Believers really are caught up to be with the Lord and the events of the Tribulation begin to occur so that you know that the gospel is true, why not investigate it now and put your faith in Christ today lest you become one of the billions who will die during the Tribulation, many before they have a chance to believe.

No wonder the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 6:2:

For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Or that Solomon says in Proverbs 27:1:

Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

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