

Israel Under Attack – Part 2

Daniel 10, Genesis 10, Genesis 6, Ephesians 6, Psalms 82, Ezekiel 28, Revelation 19, Isaiah 60, Deuteronomy 32, Jeremiah

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In our previous messages, we looked at the war Satan's been waging on God and on the human race ever since he was ejected from Heaven.

We learned that Israel's sufferings aren't just connected with God's judgment but, she's in the midst of a spiritual war that has been raging for over 3000 years!

We learned that Satan must either corrupt or destroy Israel! If he could get the Israelites would turn aside to other gods, they would be implying that the gods they turned to were greater, stronger, and more worthy of worship than Yahweh Himself.

Therefore, temptation to idolatry was ever-present with Israel, and God took every precaution to keep His people separate and pure.

This is why God prepared a special land for the Israelites; instructing them to cleanse it of any trace of heathen worship.

Exodus 23:23-24, "My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out. Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces."

Remember, the other nations were polytheistic. They recognized and acknowledged each other's gods and their gods were more or less happy to share the credit.

But there was to be no such polytheism in Israel. Israel was to be exclusively faithful to Yahweh; acknowledging that He was the one and only true God.

Isaiah 42:8, *“I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.”*

The Israelites weren't even to marry outside their own race. In Genesis 17, circumcision was introduced to set His people apart from the pagan nations that would surround them.

The bond between Israel and her God was so strong that Israel was portrayed as Yahweh's wife in passages like those found in Jeremiah 3.

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Yet the Israelites succumbed to the lure of idol worship and false gods as recorded in Numbers 25. But we must understand the polytheistic world in which they lived.

We know there's only one God and the patriarchs believed in only one God. But the situation was less clear in the minds of the Israelites after four hundred years in Egypt!

For hundreds of years, they had been in close contact with the many gods of Egypt.

They would have encountered Osiris, Isis, Seth, Nephthys, Apis, the bull god, the cat goddess, Bast, and the myriad lesser gods of that pagan nation!

And it wasn't long before the Israelites fell under the influence of these pagan gods and joined the Egyptians in their idolatry. Regardless of being blessed in the Egyptian territory of Goshen.

Then, a new Pharaoh came on the scene who brought the nation under the yoke of slavery.

He reasoned that their increasing size was a threat when, actually, it was God's judgment upon them because of their idolatry.

Ezekiel 20:8, *"But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in Egypt."*

Even when delivered from bondage by a mighty hand, there was a tendency to slip back into their former way of thinking: to regard Yahweh as just another god, as did the other nations.

After all, not long after the ten plagues, followed by the Passover and the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, the emancipated Israelites were dancing in a frenzy around the statue of Apis, the bull-god of Egypt.

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This inclination to idol worship persisted. Foreign gods surrounded them, and the worship of these Beings often infiltrated the land.

Take Solomon for example, he erected pagan temples in Israel for his seven hundred wives. 1 Kings 11:5, *"He followed Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians and Moloch, the detestable god of the Ammonites."*

We're all familiar with the story of Jezebel and the confrontation on Mt Carmel between the 450 prophets of Baal and Yahweh's prophet, Elijah.

Other prominent deities had also become popular in parts of Israel. Among these was the Babylonian goddess, Ishtar, who was previously known to the Sumerians as Inanna, the so-called 'Queen of Heaven.'

In Jeremiah 7:17-18, God asks this of the prophet: *“Do you not see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes to offer to the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to arouse my anger.”*

Another is recorded in Ezekiel 8:14 where the prophet was brought to the entrance of the north gate of the House of the Lord and there he saw, *“Women sitting there, mourning the god Tammuz.”*

The book of Hosea gives a frightening account of just how much spiritual and moral conditions had deteriorated in Israel. In fact, according to Ezekiel 20:31, it had even gone as far as child-sacrifice.

As far back as the book of Deuteronomy, Yahweh had denounced His people for their idolatry.

Deuteronomy 32:16-17, *“They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. They sacrificed to false gods, which are not God - gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your ancestors did not fear.”*

This disgraced the name of Yahweh. Yahweh, Who had laid His reputation on the line by identifying Himself as the God of Israel.

So, Israel had to make up her mind! Was Yahweh the true God, worthy of worship and obedience, or was it Baal? She couldn't have it both ways!

The choice was presented to them by Elijah. We can almost hear the frustration in the prophet's voice.

1 Kings 18:21, *“Elijah went before the people and said, How long will you waver between two opinions? If Yahweh is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”*

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Eventually, Yahweh had to distance Himself from His own people. They were bringing dishonor on His name and betraying His love for them.

Jeremiah 3 describes how He was forced to divorce both kingdoms. Israel has now been side-lined as Yahweh works out His purposes through the church.

But it's a mistake to think that God has given up on Israel! Believing this is playing straight into the Devil's hands! Israel is Yahweh's inheritance; the people of His love!

To abandon them permanently as a nation, even in favor of a glorious spiritual body such as the church, would be to concede defeat to Satan!

Remember, Satan has been trying to discredit the God of Israel for millennia by discrediting Israel, the nation that bears his name! Has he been successful?

Yes, to the point that even many Christians believe that God has permanently abandoned Israel in favor of the church. But, He hasn't!

Only because of their persistent idolatry has Yahweh temporarily allowed His people to be swallowed up by the nations. This began with the Assyrian invasion of the Kingdom of Israel in 721BC!

After deporting a majority of the Israelites, Assyria replaced them with other captive races which eventually formed a mixed-race people known in the New Testament as Samaritans.

The Babylonians continued this process of deporting the Israelites with the capture of the Kingdom of Judah in 606 BC; completing the deportations in around 586 BC.

Yet, in 536 BC, the Persian king, Cyrus, allowed the exiles to return to their homeland. At which time the city was restored under Nehemiah.

Yet, with the exception of the largely Jewish population in the land at the time of Christ, Israel has been scattered among the nations.

In fact, around 73 AD, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the siege of Masada, those left in the promised land dispersed among the nations. This is known as the diaspora. It looks like Satan has won.

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But Satan also appeared to have won in the garden of Eden as the sinful state of the world today seems to testify to this victory. Evil appears to have won out!

This is just the outward appearance. God, through His purposes, is working out everything. Ephesians 1:11, *“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.”*

We know, despite appearances, Satan is a defeated foe. Romans 16:20a, *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”*

We know that God is allowing evil today to do its worst. Romans 2:5 tells us that evil men are storing up wrath against themselves for the day of God’s wrath when His righteous judgment will be revealed.

The more man stores up wrath, the more of God’s righteous judgment appears.

Yahweh told Abraham that He wouldn't bring the Israelites out of Egypt until the fourth generation because, as He said in Genesis 15:16, *"The sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."*

So, God holds off! As a God of Righteousness, He will have everything seen in its true light. That's the basis for perfect justice! Evil must be seen for exactly what it is and acknowledged by the wrong-doer.

1 John 1:9, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

It applies to the Bema seat of judgment of believers' works recorded in 1 Corinthians 3:13, where each man's work will be seen clearly for what it is!

It's a principle that applies on Israel's Great Day of Atonement described in Zechariah 12:10-14, when that nation looks upon the One they pierced and realize their terrible sin in crucifying their Messiah.

We see this principle working in the Great White Throne of judgment in Revelation 20 where each man is judged according to the things that have been recorded.

So, Yahweh gives Satan and his henchmen every opportunity to prove themselves. In other words, He gives them enough rope to hang themselves!

Israel may be in humiliation today and it may appear that the other nations are winning, but Yahweh will be seen as righteous when He judges these nations.

Notice when He returns to execute this judgement. It's when the chaos, violence, godlessness and evil has reached its frenzied climax in the Battle of Armageddon!

One thing is certain, Satan's apparent victories over Israel are no more real and lasting than his momentary appearance of victory at Golgotha.

Christ's triumphant return to this earth will shatter Satan's nations' illusions of victory over Israel. Psalm 59:8, *"But you laugh at them, Yahweh; you scoff at all those nations."*

Listen to the words of Psalm 94:19, *"The Lord (Yahweh) will not reject his people; He will never forsake His inheritance."*

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I don't believe in replacement theology and I don't think Satan does either. Else, why continue his relentless and outrageous attacks on Israel?

Saved Jews and Gentiles are both members of Christ's body in the church today. In Galatians 6:16 the church is referred to as the *"Israel of God."*

Paul even claimed in Romans 11 that his place in the church was proof that God had not forsaken Israel.

It's also true that we, the church, have become, according to 1 Peter 2:9a, *"A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession."*

This was something conditionally promised in Exodus 19:5-6 to the nation of Israel. But it was dependent upon them obeying the terms of the Covenant that God was about to establish with them.

This isn't saying that Israel has been substituted by the church, but simply that Israel, under law, could not, in the energy of the flesh, attain that level of obedience that would entitle them to these blessings.

Neither could we! It's only through the work of Christ that we have attained our standing before God.

You may say, isn't that proving that Israel has been passed over? Because the flesh can never please God or inherit His promises?

Well, that's plausible, but regardless how forced the interpretation, the analogy could only hold if it weren't for one crucial thing.

When Israel, as a nation, recognizes its Messiah and turns to Him in repentance on its Great Day of Atonement. You have to understand that the Day of Atonement isn't just a yearly feast!

If we follow the feasts of Leviticus 23, Yom Kippur (that's another name for the Day of Atonement) follows closely after the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) and this feast signifies the Rapture.

As with the Church, Israel's restoration, her cleansing, is based on the atoning work of Christ.

The 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9, encompasses Israel's separation from Yahweh, beginning in 445 BC and ending at the end of the Tribulation.

Daniel 9:24, "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place."

This takes place upon Christ's return to the earth. So, we can see the difference between God's dealing with the Church and His dealing with His nation, Israel.

In the meantime, we can see God's hand in disciplining His faithless people. But God's discipline is never intended to harm. It's always with a view to correction, restoration and ultimate blessing.

Israel's scattering among the nations has actually helped preserve her from further destructive idolatry.

Yahweh vowed that He would ensure that she would never again turn to false gods; and that her sufferings during the *'time of the Gentiles'* would ultimately serve to restore her to Himself.

Hosea 2:6-7, *"Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.'*"

So, over the last two thousand years or so, we've had the bizarre situation in which Israel, though scattered and sown among the nations over the centuries, and in spite of having no active relationship with her God, Yahweh, has never assimilated into those nations nor has she subscribed to any other religion.

How much more evidence do we need that Yahweh has plans for her; that He's actually protecting her from herself and preserving her for their eventual reconciliation and reunion.

Hosea 3:4, *"For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods."*

But listen to verse 5, *"Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last day."*

Not the church. Israel! On the day when I act, says the Lord Almighty in Malachi 3:17a, “*They will be my treasured possession.*”

Israel may be separated from her Lord right now, but Yahweh has promised her ultimate restoration and blessing.

In the meantime, the attacks on Israel continue because Yahweh’s reputation is still on the line! His ability and right to rule are still in question and have yet to be resolved.

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But, the powers of darkness are still in assault mode! They’ve been unable to seduce Israel into idol worship, so their only recourse today is to destroy her or not recognize her as a nation at all!

Prophecy must be fulfilled exactly, and if there’s no nation of Israel, then there’ll be no throne for Christ to occupy. No throne from which He will rule the nations.

Just as the cleansing and occupation of the land under Joshua’s leadership would have been a foretaste of the inroads that God would make into Satan’s empire back then, so Israel’s re-establishment in the land serves as an ominous warning for Satan and his empire.

The false gods are panicking! No wonder there’s an increase in their attacks on Israel. Satan is attempting to neutralize the threat before it’s too late.

Yahweh has identified Himself as Israel’s God, therefore His victory must entail the victory of His nation over Satan’s nations! Which involves their destruction and that of their satanic leader.

That’s the essence of this spiritual war! Efforts to discredit or destroy Israel have redoubled. We can see these nations’ resentment and spite bubbling to the surface.

For instance, notice how Israel seems to be blamed for all the world's woes. In the Second World War, Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's social and economic problems.

In 2015, the Palestinian foreign minister presented documents to the International Criminal Court, claiming that Israel should be investigated for war crimes. The United Nations is currently contemplating this action.

Are these attitudes and accusations justified? No! But it's understandable when we take into account spiritual warfare and the nature of the enemy.

Remember that fateful meeting between God and the fallen angel-rulers in Psalm 82? It was then that they were condemned for their mismanagement of the nations and Yahweh's judgement was pronounced upon them for that reason.

This seems to be retaliation on their part! We need to understand that the demise of Israel, in any form, will bring shame and dishonor upon the name of Yahweh, their God.

In this context, and given the history of this warfare, God would be discredited. He would be shown to be weaker in His ability to govern, to protect and to preserve than the false gods of the rival nations in this world.

But it's not working for Satan! His problem is the same he's faced since Eden. All his efforts have backfired. Particularly in Christ's crucifixion.

Satan entered Judas to betray Christ only to find that in doing so, he had brought about the very thing he was trying to prevent: a victory over sin and death, which was accomplished on the cross, and triumphantly announced by Christ's resurrection.

Peter said this at Pentecost, in Acts 2:23a, *“This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge.”*

It’s little wonder that when Son of God rose from the dead, Satan and his cronies were sickened.

1 Corinthians 2:8, *“None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”*

It’s the same with Israel. For example, the holocaust served to bring about the very thing Satan was trying to prevent.

It led to the reestablishment of Israel as a nation after two thousand years; as well as instilling a national determination that nothing or anybody was going to do the same thing to them ever again.

The demonic world-rulers can see God slowly working His will for the nations through Israel and that can only end one way for them!

Upon His return, Israel’s Messiah will be vindicated! His right to rule over the nations will be universally and unquestionably established.

As I pointed out, the foretold destruction of the false gods in Psalm 82:7 was followed by the cry in verse 8: *“Rise up, O God; judge the earth - for all the nations are your inheritance!”*

Yahweh has answered and will respond to this cry. In fact, the first phase of this judgment was executed at Calvary.

Colossians 2:15, *“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”*

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In the next stage, the Lamb of God will begin the process of reclaiming His inheritance by opening the 7-sealed book (the title-deeds to this earth) in Daniel's 70th week, the final group of 7 years.

Revelation 11:18, "The nations were angry and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and your people who revere your name, both great and small, and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

The war against Israel will end! It will end with the destruction and defeat of the evil 'sons of God' together with the subjugation of their nations to Yahweh's nation.

This will bring a triumphant conclusion to the spirit-led war that has raged over the millennia.

Revelation 19:15-16, "Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords."

On the day that Yahweh returns, all the nations, in fact, the entire universe, including all the false gods and Satan himself, will be forced to acknowledge His supremacy.

Philippians 2:10-11, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

We thrill to the triumphant words of Revelation 11:15b, *"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign for ever and ever."*

Notice, it's not just in His capacity as our Lord that He returns but as Israel's long-rejected Messiah. The separation will be over; the long exile concluded!

On the Great Day of Atonement, after much weeping and mourning, according to Zechariah 12, there will be national restoration and joy.

And in all of this, Yahweh will be glorified. He will be vindicated and established in His rightful place.

Not just as the inheritor of Israel but as the great God, the Lord of Lords who gathers unto Himself all the nations as His rightful inheritance.

Ezekiel 28:25-26, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob. They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards. They will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am Yahweh, their God."

On that day, Yahweh's triumph will be Israel's triumph and Israel will be His jewel among the nations.

Isaiah 60:3-5, "Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look about you; all assemble and come to you; your sons come from afar and your daughters are carried on the hip; then you will look and be radiant. Your heart will throb and swell with joy; the wealth of the seas will be brought to you; to you the riches of the nations will come."

Slide 9

Conclusion

In closing, I'd like to make one crucial point. Satan has all sorts of reasons to hate and destroy Israel.

Paramount among these is the fact that Israel was never to be the sole beneficiary of God's grace! Israel was to be the conduit through which His blessing flowed to mankind.

Through Israel, all the other nations were to be blessed! As God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, *"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse. And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

A blessing first realized when Israel produced the Seed that crushed the serpent's head on Calvary. A blessing that will be fully realized when Israel, Yahweh's nation, is finally established at the head of the nations.

He will rule the nations from David's throne and His people, Israel, will be His jewel among the nations.

As we read in Ezekiel 28:25, *"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations."*