

Israel Inherits Promises of Old  
Amos 9:13-15, Matthew 25:31-43

### **Slide 1**

God has never given up on Israel. Every time God cursed Israel for her sin, He always followed it with a promise if they would repent.

Yet, it's frequently claimed that once Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah that God cut Israel out of His plan.

From this point of rejection, those who believe this also try to allegorize any reference to Israel in the New Testament by claiming it's a symbolic reference to the church; that the church is the new Israel.

This was the popular belief up until the time Israel was 'reborn' as a nation. Because, before this event, it appeared impossible for prophecy concerning Israel to be literally fulfilled.

Though this belief isn't as popular today as it was prior to 1948, it's still a fairly common belief. But those who hold this belief face a three-fold problem.

### **Slide 2**

The first problem with allegorizing Israel is that many scriptures, in both the Old and New Testaments, must be explain away.

So, why do people say that the Bible is literal when prophesying Israel's dispersing and then figurative when the Bible talks about God gathering them again to their land?

Why do people believe certain passages, that are plainly stated, are symbolic? This is where trouble starts.

When you begin allegorizing scripture you face the bigger problem of determining where to stop.

If passages we don't agree with are figurative, then how do we know that the passages with which we do agree aren't figurative?

Take Genesis, for example. People try to allegorize Genesis so they're not at odds with the doctrine of evolution.

Hell is allegorized so people aren't offended by the thought of judgment. Satan is allegorized so we don't look superstitious to the world.

God's judgment of sin is allegorized so people can feel okay about their lives without being challenged to live holy.

In the end we've watered down scripture to the point where it's just a book of moral stories instead of the claim that the Bible makes for itself.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

If we don't believe this passage, all other doctrinal beliefs are baseless. All Scripture is an inspiration from God – or literally translated, all Scripture is *'God Breathed.'*

We're commanded to study to show ourselves approved by God and to rightly divide the Word of truth. We must allow the Bible to determine what's figurative and what's literal.

When something in the Bible is presented literal, it's literal. When something's presented as figurative, the context will plainly show that it's figurative.

If someone steps in and attempts to override the writer's intent, they're denying the authority of scripture that was inspired by God.

Who has the greater authority; the writer of a book in the Bible that God breathed His word into or someone thousands of years later who tries to re-state what was plainly said?

### **Slide 3**

A second problem facing those who discount Israel is that, by default, they're claiming that God's promises have failed. But, as we get into these promises, we'll see that they've never been fulfilled.

Because of the disobedience of the nation, Israel's promises have been deferred. But, because God gave them to the nation without conditions, they've not and cannot be cast away.

Now, this doesn't nullify individual accountability. Israel was called by God for a purpose. The promises to Abraham and David were based on God's covenant, not based on merit.

God's covenant is always based on His character, not man's. Hebrews tells us that God could swear by no one greater, so He swore on Himself.

Now, don't confuse promises of blessings given for obedience with promises of God's plan given by a covenant.

Romans 11 tells us that God called Israel and makes it clear that His call cannot be revoked. Israel will fulfill God's plan.

Just as the disobedient Israelites died in the desert while God raised others who'd be willing to follow Him into the Promised Land, God's also raising up His people to fulfill their call to be a light to the Gentiles.

When one won't obey, God will raise up another. Regardless of who's willing to obey, God's plan will be fulfilled.

#### **Slide 4**

The third problem with discounting Israel is that it makes the grace of God dependent on merit. Israel is a living picture of God's grace.

Just look at the grace of God in an individual's life. The Bible says that before we received Christ we were at war with God. We, as individuals, were enemies of God.

Yet, while we were enemies and dead in our sins, Jesus justified us by nailing our sins with Him to His cross. However, even as children of God, many turn from God's ways and pursue the world.

If we're truly His, the Bible says that God will chastise us and lead us back to Himself. Even though we're in disobedience, God still loves us and will deal with us based on our responsiveness to His correction.

A child who disobeys and repents quickly won't be judged as severely as a child who's stubborn and resistant to correction. The same applies with the church and Israel.

We are called the children of God, but so is Israel. God said, *"For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn."* Israel is the prodigal son.

Remember, the son who left home wasn't any less loved than the son who stayed. Therefore, unlike the prodigal son, Israel didn't leave with its inheritance but was driven away from their inheritance.

And now, God's waiting for them to come home at which time they'll inherit the promises He has had in store all along.

God's grace is not dependent on Israel's worthiness any more than His grace is dependent on my righteousness.

I came to Christ as a sinner unworthy of God's grace, yet when I came, I was credited with God's own righteousness and I inherited the promises that I'll see when faith becomes sight.

The promises made to Israel weren't because they were worthy or because they're righteous. The promises made to Israel were because God is merciful and good.

There are many passages that testify that God will give Israel their inheritance. I've selected two that illustrate it clearly.

*Isaiah 49:7-8, "Thus says the LORD, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, To Him whom man despises, To Him whom the nation abhors, To the Servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, Because of the LORD who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; And He has chosen You." Thus says the LORD: "In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You As a covenant to the people, To restore the earth, To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages."*

*Amos 9:13-15, "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it. I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them," Says the LORD your God."*

There are two important things we should note from these passages:

- Israel's inheritance will be received after she has been judged and gathered again.
- They'll not be removed from the land again.

This tells us that the judgment didn't nullify the promise and the promise couldn't have been fulfilled in the past because they were removed from their land.

Joel 2:18-31 promises that God will drive out the northern army and judge them and give Israel plenty. Micah 4 promises that every man in Israel will sit under his fig tree and no one will be afraid.

These promises are after God destroys those who hate His people.

### **Slide 5**

*Matthew 25:31-36, 41-43, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*

...

*"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'"*

This passage is often confused with salvation but this isn't the subject at hand. Salvation is not and has never been based on individual merit or works of any kind.

We're told clearly in Ephesians 2:8-9, *"For by grace are you saved and not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast."*

If this were the judgment of salvation, it would be in direct conflict with the rest of the New Testament. As always, scripture must be interpreted with scripture.

No passage stands alone. We know when the sheep will be separated from the goats by the context of the passage. It's when Jesus returns to reign on the earth.

If we look at other passages that foretell this event, we can gain a better understanding. Zechariah 14 fills in this gap.

*Zechariah 14:16-17, "And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain."*

If we carry this prophecy back to Matthew, we can see that Jesus will separate those who remain. Jesus will deal with *"everyone who is left of all the nations."*

Those who persecuted God's people and those who had the power to help but allowed God's people to suffer will be the goats. Neglecting those who suffer is judged just as severely as causing others to suffer.

Proverbs 21:13 says, *“Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.”*

In Ezekiel 9, God judges His people for the sins of the nation. God first preserves those who wept over the sins and abominations of the people and then commanded everyone else to be judged.

Not only were those who committed atrocities judged, but also those who were cold and indifferent to these sins. We see the same principle taught here.

Those who closed their ears to the suffering of Israel during their plight are judged as goats along with those who actually pursued the destruction of Israel.

There will be survivors of the Great Tribulation period, though it'll be few. If you look at the mounting death tolls in Revelation you see that only a fraction of mankind will survive.

We're told that those who are enemies of God's people will be destroyed with the brightness of His coming. I believe that's why you don't see the persecutors among the nations Jesus is judging.

Of those who do survive, only those who were counted faithful will be allowed to enter the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

Showing pity on Israel doesn't equate to eternal salvation. Eternal salvation depends on the Cross and faith in Jesus Christ.

Those who reject Christ will be judged for their sins. After the 1000-year reign of Christ, the unredeemed will be allowed to choose to accept or reject Christ.

For this message it's sufficient to understand that during the 1000-year reign of Christ, Israel will inherit the land and blessings that they were promised, and the remnant of the nations will be judged worthy or unworthy to enter that kingdom.

## **Slide 6**

### Conclusion

The promises of God are a sure foundation. But, only those who belong to Christ will inherit the promises.

We know from scripture that the purpose of God's judgment on earth is to lead men to repentance. Romans 2 tells us that the goodness of God leads us to repentance.

To some, seeing the hope and goodness of God draws us to Him. For others, God must show the worthlessness of this life.

When people see that there's no hope in this world, many will recognize the goodness of God, understanding that judgment is the goodness of God.

That judgment is God's shepherd's staff that turns us away from the path of eternal destruction.

Even so, there'll be many who simply don't want God. There'll be many who storm through the roadblocks desiring the misery of hell rather than submitting themselves to their Creator.

Judgment doesn't override our will; it only shows the consequences of a will in rebellion against God.

Everything in this life points us to the true hope of Jesus Christ. God works in our lives to show us His salvation.

And when we see that salvation, whether through the joys of God or the hopelessness of this world, God gives us a clear choice that we must all make.

God opens the window so we can see, then He honors the choice we make. That's why Israel is a picture of the Christian life.

God guided, taught, strengthened, and poured out His goodness of Israel. In spite of all this, Israel was continually drawn to the world.

When prosperity failed, God sent prophets to warn them. When warnings failed, God sent unrest. When unrest failed, God sent enemies. When enemies failed, God sent destruction.

When Israel repented, God delivered them. When we fall away, God draws us back by His goodness. We may think that He's unjust by interfering with our lives, but God sees the end from the beginning.

God looks at the day when we'll stand before Him in eternity. If suffering or judgment works to guide us into His promises in Heaven, then it's a blessing and not a curse.

Could we call God good if He allowed us to blissfully go through this life ignorant of the eternal cost of our disobedience?

Can we call God unjust if He sends trouble and allows us to be miserable enough to turn from a life that is destined for destruction? No! God is good.

We can look at the unmerited favor God has shown Israel as an evidence of His grace toward us.