

### ISRAEL AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD

#### Sharing

1. As we near the end of time, many Bible students have their eyes fixed on the middle east eagerly watching to see what happens there because they believe that the literal nation of Israel continues to be 'God's Chosen People' as they once were in the Old Testament. What is your opinion?
  - Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do the Biblical prophecies concerning the end of this world's history point to the physical nation of Israel or do they have a more spiritual, deeper meaning?
  - Discuss: \_\_\_\_\_
3. When Jesus came the first time the Jews were looking for a literal kingdom that would triumph over their enemies. Instead, they got a spiritual kingdom that would triumph over evil—the ultimate enemy of the entire universe. What is God's goal for planet earth?
  - Discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Studying

4. When Jesus came to earth the first time, the Jews, as well as His own disciples, misinterpreted the promise of His kingdom. Even during Jesus' life and ministry the people were watching and waiting for an earthly kingdom—that did not appear. Looking at Jesus on the cross, they were still clinging to a hope for a physical kingdom to defeat their earthly Roman enemies, and their hopes were crushed.
5. **The prophecies to the nation of Israel were spiritually fulfilled in Jesus Christ.**
  - Read Hosea 11:1 "When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my \_\_\_\_\_ out of Egypt" This prophecy was spoken well after the literal nation of Israel had fallen in and out of apostasy many times. So, did God have a deeper spiritual meaning?
  - Read Matthew 2:15 "And was there until the death of Herod that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My \_\_\_\_\_." In this text Matthew is quoting from Hosea and is confirming that Israel spoken of in Hosea was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This is a spiritual application to the name of Israel.
  - Read Exodus 4:22 "Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my \_\_\_\_\_ son...' " God called Israel His Son, and His firstborn in the Old Testament but in the New Testament these terms are applied to Jesus in fulfillment of the prophecy.
  - Read Colossians 1:13-15 "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the \_\_\_\_\_ of every creature." So, Paul also understood that the Old Testament prophecies about Israel had their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
6. Peter also understood that the Old Testament prophecies concerning literal Israel had their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. In the following verses let's compare the Book of Isaiah with the Book of Galatians written by the Apostle Paul and the Book of Exodus with the Apostle Peter's first book.

- Read Isaiah 41:8 “But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the \_\_\_\_\_ of Abraham my friend.” This was applied to literal Israel. Now take a look at this next Bible verse written in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul:
  - Read Galatians 3:16 “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, ‘And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy \_\_\_\_\_, which is Christ.’” Do you see the truth? Bible verses that applied to Israel in the Old Testament are no applied to Jesus Christ. Israel is no longer the ‘seed,’ Jesus Christ is now the ‘seed.’ Christ overcame and fulfilled where Israel failed.
  - Read Exodus 19:6 “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy \_\_\_\_\_. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” These words are applied to the New Testament church and include all believers in Jesus Christ both Jew and Gentile.
  - Read 1 Peter 2:9 “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy \_\_\_\_\_, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Notice that Peter says that they were ‘called out of darkness into His marvelous light.’ This could not be referring to the Jews because they already had been given the light but hadn’t accepted it. It was the Gentiles who were in darkness and were called into the light.
7. **Literal Jews are no longer God’s chosen people nor does the nation of Israel have any significance in end time events.**
- Read Galatians 3:26-29 “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” So, anyone who is in Christ is now the seed of Abraham—this is spiritual Israel.
  - Read Acts 15:7-9 “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, and the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us. And put no \_\_\_\_\_ between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”
  - Read Philippians 3:3 “For we are the circumcision (Jews) which worship God in the \_\_\_\_\_ and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.” Being a circumcised Jew no longer counted. Anyone of any nation who accepts and follows Jesus Christ is a spiritual Jew and an heir to the kingdom of God.
8. **Jesus told a parable that addressed the issue of the gospel being taken from the Jews and given to the world.**
- Read Matthew 21:33,34 “Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his \_\_\_\_\_ to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.” In this story, God is the landowner and the vinedressers represent the nation of Israel. God’s prophets are the servants sent to the vinedressers.
  - Read Matthew 21:35-38 “And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir, Come, let us \_\_\_\_\_ him and seize his inheritance.’” The nation of Israel killed God’s prophets. Now God had sent His Son and Jesus is saying that they were also planning to kill him. The Pharisees listening to this story became furious because they knew that Jesus was speaking of them.

9. **Jesus told Israel that the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to another nation.**
- Read Matthew 21:43 “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be \_\_\_\_\_ from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” This is brutally honest language from Jesus that infuriated His Jewish listeners.
10. **The probation period allotted for the Jewish nation was given to the prophet Daniel 600 years before the birth of Jesus Christ.**
- At the end of the probationary period, by killing God’s prophets and refusing to accept Jesus as the Messiah, in fact killing Him, their “cup would be filled” and they would no longer retain their distinction as God’s chosen people.
  - Read Daniel 9:20,21 “Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people \_\_\_\_\_, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.”
  - Read Daniel 9:22,23 “And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to \_\_\_\_\_. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved.”
  - Read Daniel 9:24 “Seventy weeks are determined for your \_\_\_\_\_ (Daniel’s people were the Jews) and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”
11. **The 70-week probationary period allotted for the Jews began in 457 BC.**
- Read Ezra 7:7 “Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the \_\_\_\_\_ year of King Artaxerxes.”
  - The starting event was a decree from Persian King Artaxerxes authorizing God’s people (who were captive in Babylon) to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. The decree, found in Ezra chapter 7, was issued in 457 BC, the seventh year of the king, and was implemented in the autumn. Artaxerxes began his reign in 467 BC.
12. **In Bible prophecy a day equals a year of prophetic time.**
- Seventy weeks (70 weeks x 7 days/week = 490 years).
13. **Daniel’s prophecy contained the exact time that the Messiah would come;** predicted 500 years before it happened.
- Read Daniel 9:25 “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until the \_\_\_\_\_ the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be build again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.”
  - 7 weeks + 62 weeks = 69 weeks (sixty-nine weeks = 483 years). So, Daniel was shown that the Messiah would be anointed in 483 years. Moving forward 483 years from the starting date of 457 BC reaches to the fall of 27 AD. The word “Messiah” means “anointed” and Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38) at His baptism (Luke 3:21,22). Jesus’ baptism took place in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1) which was in 27 AD. Right on God’s schedule!

14. **Daniel's prophecy predicts events in the last week (7 days) of the 490 years of probationary time allotted for the nation of Israel.**

- Read Daniel 9:26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be \_\_\_\_\_ off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined." (Jesus was anointed in 27 AD at His baptism and in 31 AD He was crucified "in the midst of the week—three and one-half years after His anointing.)
- Read Daniel 9 27 "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the \_\_\_\_\_ He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate." Jesus covenant was His agreement to save people from their sins (Hebrews 10:16,17). After his crucifixion, Jesus confirmed the covenant through His disciples (Hebrews 2:3)
- After Jesus' crucifixion, there remained three and one-half years of the probationary period allotted to the Jews in Daniel's prophecy. During this time, the disciples and apostles began preaching with vigor and thousands were converted. This infuriated the Jews who brought one godly man, Stephen, before the Sanhedrin (the high Jewish court) to question him. Stephen preached a blistering sermon!
- Read Acts 7:54 "When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they \_\_\_\_\_ at him with their teeth." They were furious. So much so, that they promptly took Stephen out and publicly stoned him to death. The year was 34 AD—exactly at the end of the probationary period allotted by God in Daniel's prophecy.
- As Jesus had said in his parable of the vinedressers, they had killed God's prophets and finally killed His Son. Their probation was ended when they killed Stephen. From that moment onward the Jews, because they rejected Jesus as the Messiah, were no longer God's chosen nation. All people who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior are now God's chosen people, "heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)

15. **Paul made it very, very clear that the gospel had been taken from the Jewish nation and would now go to the Gentile world.**

- Read Acts 18:6 "But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads' I am clean. From now on I will go to the \_\_\_\_\_."
- Read Romans 2:28,29 "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one \_\_\_\_\_; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."
- Read Galatians 3:28,29 "There is neither \_\_\_\_\_ nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female' for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

16. **Individual Jews may repent and come to Jesus Christ. However, as a nation, they no longer have a place as God's chosen people.**

- If Christians want to understand God's Word they must stop applying Bible prophecy to physical, literal Israel and begin applying it to spiritual Israel—which is comprised of all those who follow Jesus Christ. When we put aside man's teachings and come to God's Word with prayer and faith, God will be faithful and reveal His will to us.
- God wants every person to be saved.

17. **The prophecies given by God to Israel were conditional.**

- Read: 1 Kings 9:6-7 “But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you . . . Then will I \_\_\_\_\_ off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people.”

## Applying this lesson

18. Many modern day authors argue that in connection with the second coming of Christ, God intends to reestablish a Jewish kingdom in Palestine. The doctrine contends that there is yet a purpose to be served by physical nation of Israel.

- After studying this lesson I understand that God’s prophecies were conditional and the nation of Israel apostatized from God and therefore has no importance in end time events.
- \_\_\_\_\_A check mark at left indicates that I understand there is no significance to the popular belief in the rise of the nation of Israel before Jesus returns.

19. Because of the continuous rebellion of the Jewish nation, consummated by the murder of Jesus Christ, God rejected the Hebrew people and repudiated that nation. (Matthew 21:44).

- In the parable of the vinedresser told by Jesus in Matthew 21, Jesus clearly indicates that the gospel would be taken from the Jews.
- \_\_\_\_\_A check mark at left indicates that I will not harbor a false belief about the end-time importance of the Jewish nation.

20. As a consequence of Israel’s rejection of the Messiah, God has replaced physical Israel with a new nation, spiritual Israel. Today, the “Jew” is not one who is so physically, but one who is so inwardly, that is, spiritually (Romans 2:28-29). In this age, those who submit to the gospel plan of redemption—whether Jew or Gentile (Romans 1:16) become children of God, and therefore are the true “seed of Abraham” (Galatians 3:26-29).

- I have learned that God wants all people to be saved.
- \_\_\_\_\_A check mark at left indicates that I understand that all people are created equal in the sight of God and that He died to save each man, woman and child.