

GOD'S CHOSEN

Ray Flores October 29, 2023

Today's message is about Israel's role in history and prophecy, and why we as believers should pay attention to what happens in Israel and to the Jewish people.

Israel is central to the story of the Bible. The Bible records Israel's past, and prophecies about its future. The Jews are God's chosen people through whom He provided a Savior to rescue mankind from their sins. This Savior - Jesus Christ - was born, died, and rose from the dead in Israel. He is coming again, and will rule from Israel's capital of Jerusalem.

1. Why Israel and the Jews? Because it's God's plan.

Genesis 12: 1-3 NIV The Call of Abram (Abram means 'exalted father', which is pretty great. God later changes his name to Abraham which means 'father of a multitude')

¹ The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

² "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 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."

Genesis 17:17-19 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" ¹⁹ Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

One child from the flesh; one child from the Spirit. God did make Ishmael a nation, and tells us the kind of people they would become.

Genesis 16:12 NIV He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers."

2. Whose land is it anyway?

God gave the land of Canaan to His people, the Israelites. Canaan is modern-day Israel, "from the Negev wilderness in the south to the Lebanon mountains in the north, from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, including all the land of the Hittites" (Joshua 1:4 NLT). This would include the West Bank and Gaza, some of Egypt and Syria, all of Jordan, plus some of Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

3. Wars and rumors of war.

Israel has fought seven wars since its re-establishment in 1948. Despite being surrounded and outgunned they have always come out victorious. Praise and thanks be to God who cares for them and intercedes on their behalf!

Matthew 24:42-44 NIV "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

4. What about Bible prophecy and the End Times?

Ezekiel 38:1-6 NIV The Lord's Great Victory Over the Nations

The word of the Lord came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshek and Tubal; prophesy against him ³ and say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. ⁴ I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army - your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords.

⁵ Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, ⁶ also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops—the many nations with you.

Notes: In chapter 37 Ezekiel revealed how Israel (God's people) would be restored to their land from many parts of the world. Once Israel became strong, a confederacy of nations from the north would attack, led by Gog. Their purpose would be to destroy God's people. God's allies would come from the mountainous area southeast of the Black Sea and Southwest of the Caspian sea (Central Turkey) as well as from the area that is present-day Iran, Ethiopia, Libya, and possibly Russia. Gog could be a person. Gog could also be a symbol of all the evil in the world. Whether symbolic or literal Gog represents the aggregate military might of all the forces opposed to God. Many say that the battle Ezekiel described will occur at the end of human history but there are many differences between the events described here and those in Revelation 20 regardless of when this battle will occur. The message is clear: God will deliver his people when we stand before his mighty power.

“Magog,” which represents Russia, will join with five other nations from the north to come against Israel. One of those nations is Persia, which is today known as Iran. Hamas is financed and supplied arms by Iran. Israel's conflict with Hamas came from the south, and Israel presently has the United States' support in its efforts to defend itself, indicating that we are not yet witnessing this prophecy. If the northern nations begin to engage in battle and the U.S. backs out of the conflict, those events may signal that the prophecy in Ezekiel 38 is coming to pass.

There appears to be a shift among nations. The UN refuses to call Hamas a terrorist organization and is putting pressure on Israel to not be “too harsh” in their response to the Hamas attacks. The U.S. faces other threats from within and without. We may be “stretched too thin” to continue supporting Israel.

5. What's next?

The next major event in Biblical prophecy is the rapture. Christ comes in the clouds to “snatch away” all those who trust in Him. At the same time, the dead in Christ will be resurrected and taken to heaven, too. The rapture is imminent; biblical prophecy needs to be fulfilled before the rapture happens. God is bringing the age of grace to a close. This may sound scary, but for the believer it is exciting! To worship in the actual presence of Jesus and be reunited with loved ones who placed their trust in God. And that's only the beginning! The Father is laying it all out in His Word. Up next:

- Rise of antichrist Rev 13:1
- Tribulation Rev 19:6-10
- Battle Gog and Magog (some place this before the tribulation) Ezekiel 38,39
- The abomination of desolation, midway through the tribulation Rev 12:17
- The 2nd coming of Christ Matt 24:30.
- Battle of Armageddon Rev 19:11-21
- The judgment of the nations Matt 25:31-46, the
- Binding of Satan Rev 20 1-3
- The millennial kingdom Rev 20
- Satan cast into the lake of fire Rev 20:7-10
- The great white throne judgment Rev 20:11-15
- The new creation Rev 21-22

⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

“May they prosper who love you.

⁷ “May peace be within your walls,
And prosperity within your palaces.”

⁸ For the sake of my brothers and my friends,
I will now say, “May peace be within you.”

⁹ For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your good.