

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG36 Israel In The Last Days

In this podcast, I'd like to talk about Israel in the last days. There is so much talk about the end time and the events of the end time, things that will happen and take place around all of the world. But one of the most crucial issues has to be, what about Israel? What about the Jewish people, and what really takes place in the last days concerning Israel and the Jewish people? To me, what happens with Israel in the last days is that they return to the Lord. They seek Him with all of their heart, He makes a new covenant with them, according to Jeremiah 31:31, and they walk in all of the words that God has promised and prophesied and spoken over them in the Scriptures. So I am going to read several verses; I want to keep this very scriptural. I want to read verses that really impact and answer this question of what is the stance of the Jewish people with God.

I know that in the Christian church, many are taught that God has rejected the Jewish people because they rejected Jesus as Savior and Messiah. And so God has rejected them, and now the church has replaced them, which is called replacement theology, or supersessionism. There is so much that is out there in teachings along these lines. But I always feel, when I hear people talk about it, that it really shows the lack of reading the Scriptures; and what does the Bible itself say about Israel, about the Jewish people, about God's attitude towards Israel and His positioning with them? So I'm going to try to keep it very scriptural along those lines. I know I'll read several verses here, but I think they'll be fun, exciting, engaging, and I think it will be very educational for us.

I'm going to begin in Deuteronomy, the fourth chapter, starting with verses 22-31. This is Moses speaking, and he says, "For I will die in this land, I shall not cross the Jordan, but you shall cross and take possession of this good land. So watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the Lord your God has commanded you. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord your God so as to provoke Him to anger, I call upon heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord drives you. There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days" – notice that: in the latter days, in the end time, "you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice. For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them."

One of the reasons this verse to me is very significant in answering the question is that it's Moses speaking; and it's the very beginning of the issue about the Jewish people, and it carries it through all

the way to the conclusion of what happens with the Jewish people. So Moses is saying, "Here's what I see. Here's what's going to happen. I call heaven and earth to witness against you, and there will be correction; the Lord will chasten you, all these things will transpire of punishment upon you. But, in the last days you will seek God, you will go after Him, you will find Him." So that to me is telling the beginning of the story of Israel's failures, and also the end of the story of Israel's seeking after Him and finding the Lord.

We go to Hosea, the third chapter, starting with verses 4-5. "For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar and without ephod or household idols. Afterwards the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days." Very clearly, in the last days, where does Israel position itself? It comes seeking the Lord. Very wonderful. I love these prophecies.

Jeremiah 30, verses 16-24. "Therefore, all who devour you will be devoured." Now this verse is a little different, but it points to, again, what is happening in the end time. And we see that all those who have positioned themselves against Israel, then God brings punishment to them. Some of these nations that are being spoken of here, or people that are being talked about, the Lord actually used them to discipline Israel. But we know, as we read the Scriptures, that they went beyond what the Lord was looking for in disciplining them, and they sought to destroy them. And so now, in this end time, there is a place where God Himself comes back relating to those who had related to Israel, and He punishes them for their attitudes and their actions against Israel and the Jewish people.

So I'll begin again, at verse 16 of Jeremiah 30, "Therefore all who devour you will be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, will go into captivity; and those who plunder you will be for plunder, and all who prey upon you I will give for prey. For I will restore you to health and I will heal you of your wounds," declares the Lord, "Because they have called you an outcast, saying: 'It is Zion; no one cares for her.'" Thus says the Lord, "Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwelling places; and the city will be rebuilt on its ruin, and the palace will stand on its rightful place. From them will proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those who celebrate; and I will multiply them and they will not be diminished; I will also honor them and they will not be insignificant. Their children also will be as formerly, and their congregation shall be established before Me; and I will punish all their oppressors. Their leader shall be one of them, and their ruler shall come forth from their midst; and I will bring him near and he shall approach Me;" Now listen to this, because this is very much a messianic prophecy about the last days. "Their leader will come from their midst." Where does Yeshua, Jesus, come from? He was a Jew. He lived as an observant Jew. "Their ruler shall come forth from their midst; and I will bring him near and he shall approach Me; for who would dare to risk his life to approach Me?" declares the Lord." But who lives at the right hand of the father, even now as we speak? We know it is their ruler. And He comes from out of His people.

"You shall be My people, and I will be your God. Behold, the tempest of the Lord! Wrath has gone forth, a sweeping tempest; it will burst on the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord will not turn back until he has performed and until He has accomplished the intent of His heart. In the latter days you will understand this."

Going on to Jeremiah 33:7-9, "I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel and will rebuild them as they were at first. I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me." Now think about this, because one of the great accusations of Christians

that I hear speaking is all the sins of Israel, all the failures of the Jewish people, and everything that's happened in their history. But this is what happens in their future. God Himself says, "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned." Nobody's saying that they haven't made mistakes. Nobody's saying that they haven't failed in following with all their hearts to walk with God. Nobody's saying they haven't sinned against the Lord. But He says, "Their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, I will pardon, and their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me. It will be to Me a name of joy, praise and glory before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good that I do for them, and they will fear and tremble because of all of the good and all the peace that I make for it." Now this is very significant, because whatever Israel has gone through in the past, or is going through now, in their future when God heals them, when God cleanses them, when God blesses them, it's going to have the purpose of honoring God and bringing praise and glory to His Name from all of the nations. Not only that, it will bring fear and trembling from all of the nations, because they will see how He has honored that which they have despised.

Micah the seventh chapter, verse 18, "Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love." God's love for Israel has never changed. It will never change. It cannot ever change. Verses 19-20, "He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham, which You swore to our forefathers from the days of old."

Now one of the key verses to me of course is always Jeremiah 31, beginning with verse 31, where God begins to speak of this new covenant. Because not only are these things that God is going to do just a mere promise, this is a covenant that will be made between God and Israel, God and Jacob, God and Judah. This is a covenant that we will see take place. And I cannot wait for it to happen. Verses 31-36, "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,' declares the Lord. 'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the Lord, 'I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the Lord, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.'

"Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of hosts is His name: 'If this fixed order departs from before Me,' declares the Lord, 'then the offspring of Israel will also will cease from being a nation before Me forever.'" So when people talk about the fact that God has rejected Israel, these verses again make that absolutely an impossibility. And not only that, this is the Scripture saying the exact opposite, and it is the Lord Himself declaring it: "If the sun stops coming up in the morning and setting at night, if the moon and the stars cease to exist, only then will the offspring of Israel cease from before Me as a nation – but that's not going to happen. They are going to be before Me forever."

Verse 37 says, "Thus says the Lord, 'If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,' declares the Lord." So it doesn't matter what all they've done. You can name everything they've done.

You can point out their problems, their sins, their down fallings, whatever, but that's not the issue. The issue is, can you measure the foundations of the earth and search out all that is below? Can you measure the heavens? If you can do that, then maybe God will reject His people. But He is not going to reject His people because of their fallings, or their sins, or their rebellion, or any of the acts that everybody points to and says, "Because of this and this and this, God will reject." He goes, "Then I also will cast off the offspring of Israel for all they have done." Otherwise, no matter what they have done, He does not cast them off. Jeremiah 50 verse 20 goes on to say, "'In those days and at that time,' declares the Lord, 'search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.'"

So these are all amazing Scriptures that clarify what is the end time relationship between God and His people. And it should also be part of forming ours. Now I know many will say, "Okay, that's all from the Old Testament. The Old Testament is old, and you know, Christians replaced everything about all the promises, all the prophecies. Everything doesn't belong to Israel anymore, they only belong to Christians." And that is absolutely not true. But just in case you are of that ilk, let's go to Romans the eleventh chapter starting at verses 17-18: "But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches."

What is he saying here? He is talking to Christians. He is talking to believers, saying, "Look, if you're saying that Israel was broken off as branches are broken off of the olive tree, and that you, being from a wild olive tree, you Gentiles who had nothing to do with God – you were without God in the world, and you were taken and grafted in and have by virtue of that become partakers in the root of the olive tree – well then, be careful. "Do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you." And we get that wrong sometimes. We believe everything is surrounding the Christian faith, and it's not. It all was derived. The root is God, and the foundations of it come from the Hebrew Scriptures, and what we've been taught in and through them; and the prophecies and the promises are directly emerging from that. So you don't support the root; we as Christianity don't support the root. We are the younger brother who is grafted in by the grace of God to the root of the tree, that we might even be part of the foundations of the family.

In verses 19-22, he says, "You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.' Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off." And part of that kindness is our kindness towards Israel and the Jewish people. Verse 23, "And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again." And those are the verses we've been reading; no matter what Israel has done and what punishment and correction God has brought, He at the end brings them back in. He at the end blesses them. They find Him, they seek Him, He washes them of their sin.

This is the future. They are grafted in. "For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery – so that you will not be wise in your own estimation – that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written." Can I read that again? "And so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written." Written where?

Written in these verses that I have just been reading you. "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.' From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Romans 11:24-29) The promises of God and the choosing of God of the Jewish people, of Israel, is an irrevocable promise from God. God is not a man that He can lie. If He rejects Israel, He's a liar; and He's not.

Verses 30-33, "For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all." We are no different than they are. All of mankind has been shut up into disobedience so that God may show mercy and grace to all. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" This is such a great thing.

There's one more parable I want to read to you, because I think this parable is about what happens in the end time with the Jewish people. And I think it is a warning to us, as believers, to be careful of our attitudes and our actions towards Israel and towards the Jews. Matthew 20, starting with verse 1 through 16: "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and to those he said, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' And so they went. Again he went out about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, and did the same thing. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day long?' They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.' When those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius. When those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they grumbled at the landowner, saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.' But he answered and said to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? or is your eye envious because I am generous? So the last shall be first, and the first last."

We may find in these last days, that seemingly the Jewish people at the last minute even, in some people's minds, may be the most receptive of Messiah's appearings. And I have a feeling it may cause a little bit of angst among those who have been so convinced that God was rejecting and judging the Jewish people, when in fact they are the first. They have been the first chosen by God, and the first to receive covenants and promises by God. And in these last times, they will be the last; but they will still, by the promise and proclamation of the prophecies and the Word of God, they will enter into all that God has for them. And God will fulfill every Word and every promise and every blessing that He has spoken to them of. And they will be with their King, David, ruling and reigning on this earth as God's people.

So we should remember that too often, Christians are taught, in this day and age especially, that the Jews have rejected Christ and therefore God has rejected and judged them. Do not forget that for the first fifteen years or so of the Church – and this grieves me, that people are so unfamiliar with the history of the Church – but for the first fifteen years or more, the Church was only made up of Jews. So when somebody says the Jews rejected Jesus, that's crazy. The Jews were the Church for fifteen years. According to the Book of Acts, the early Church was made up of thousands upon thousands of believers; and you know what? they were Jews.

Paul and the Gospel make it clear that the Jewish people were the first, God's chosen people, and therefore will be the last to receive the promise. And there is yet one more covenant to be made between God and His people, that new covenant of Jeremiah 31. And we believe with all of our hearts to see it manifest. Father, bring quickly the days of Messiah. Bring quickly this new covenant between You and Your people. Let it be a day of honor and glory and worship to You, as people are astounded at Your love, Your grace, and the fulfillment of Your Word. Amen.