

## Israel: God's Chosen Land; Jews: God's Chosen People

'On the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land; from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates"' (Genesis 15:18).

"And I will make of you (Abraham) a great nation and I will bless you and make your name famous, and you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you and curse him who curses you. In you, will all the families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:2 & 3).

When the Lord God of Israel makes a statement, it always comes true because He has spoken it. God's covenant with Abraham guarantees that the boundaries stated in Genesis will one day hold true. God promised to Abraham and his descendants, as a perpetual inheritance, the land between the Euphrates and the Nile Rivers, and God cares about all of this land because it belongs to Him. 'A land for which the Lord your God cares. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year' (Deuteronomy 11:12).

Israel is deeply embedded in the hearts and souls of the Jewish people. 'For your servants take pleasure in the stones and favour her dust' (Psalm 102:14). Israel is their land, given to them by God and every non-Jewish person on this earth needs to realise that. "'Yes, I (the Lord) will rejoice over them (the Jews) to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly and in truth, with My whole heart and with My whole soul. I will restore their fortunes," says the Lord' (Jeremiah 32:41).

Why is Israel the 'Holy' land? Because the Lord has chosen to establish His name there. 'I will gather them and will bring them to the place where I have chosen as a dwelling for My Name' (Nehemiah 1:9). 'Also your people (the Jews) shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My (God's) planting, the work of My hands, that I might be glorified' (Isaiah 60:21).

We have established that Israel was God's chosen land from the days of Abraham, and it still is. God is calling Jews from all over the world to return to His land. Abraham was the father and founder of the Jewish people and they are still God's chosen people and always will be. God planned for salvation to come to the Gentiles via the Jews (John 4:22). Gentiles are not terrible people; they are simply non-Jews who are blessed by the righteousness of Abraham. 'In you (Abraham and his descendants) will all the families of the earth be blessed' (Genesis 12:2). All families – both Jews and Gentiles.

Jesus was a Jewish Man descended directly from Abraham, and so the promise made to Abraham by God in that scripture was fulfilled 2,000 years later, when Paul took the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly saying, "It was necessary that God's message [of salvation through Christ] should be spoken to you [the Jews] first ... and now, behold, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

We non-Jewish people, have a lot to thank the Jews for. It can't be stated strongly enough, how much we need to appreciate Jewish people. They brought us our salvation! Our eternal life! Thank God for the Jews! Praise God for them! John 4:22 says our salvation comes from the Jews. Plus, they brought us the whole Bible. We read in Exodus 17:14; Exodus 24:4 & 7; Exodus 34:27; Numbers 33:2 and in Exodus 33:11 where the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, like a man speaks to his friend, and the Lord told Moses to write everything down. From that humble beginning in the desert, we have the wonderful salvation message, written by Jews as they were inspired by God; and all scripture is God-breathed. (2 Timothy 3:16). Other Jewish men, the prophets and later the apostles, wrote more of God's word down, which has been recorded for us to learn from.

Through the sacrifice of Jesus we can have eternal life. Jesus was written about, way back in the book of Genesis, right through to Malachi. Through the writings of God-fearing, righteous Jews, we know we Gentiles can be adopted into the eternal Kingdom of God, and therefore receive the same inheritance given to the Jewish people; and God blesses us if we receive the word given to us. 'Blessed are your eyes because they do see and your ears because they do hear' (Matthew 13:16).

Jews are, and will always be God's chosen people, and we are to help and bless the Jews in any way we can. Jesus calls them His brothers, and giving them a mere glass of water, is as important to God as giving that same glass of water to Jesus Himself. From the other perspective, if we don't support the Jews, then we are failing to do these things for Jesus. Read Jesus' attitude to helping the Jews in Matthew 25:31 to 46; '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 nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people from one another as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats; and He will cause the sheep to stand at His right hand, but the goats at His left. Then the King will say to those at 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 something to drink, I was a stranger and you brought Me together with yourselves and welcomed Me and lodged Me. I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me with care, I was in prison and you came to see Me."

Then the just will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger and welcomed You, or naked and clothed You? And when did we see You sick or in prison and came to visit You?'

And the King will reply to them, "Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least of these, My brothers, you did it for Me."

Then He will say to those at His left hand, "Begone from Me, you cursed, into the eternal 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 nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit Me."

Then they also will answer, "Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?"

And He will reply to them, "Solemnly I declare to you, in so far as you failed to do it for the least of these, you failed to do it for Me"

Then they will go away into eternal punishment, but those who are just, will go into eternal life'.

In this text, the 'sheep' are the believers and the 'goats' are non believers. Jesus was referring to the Jews because He called the needy, His brothers. We, as committed Christians, have an obligation to support Israel both financially and through prayer. 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they prosper who love you!' (Psalm 122:6). Could it be God's will for you personally to support Israel? Could God be calling you to pray for and help feed, clothe, house and bless His people? In Israel today, 25% of the population live under the poverty line. Many families who immigrated in fulfillment of Bible prophecy, are in this category. The world wide family of Bridges for Peace has been raised up to give help to the people of Israel. They are in a unique position, as being some whom God is using to fulfil the scripture in Matthew 25. Throughout history, the Jews have faced terrible persecution and aloneness. Often the Christian world ignored their plight or worse, participated in their persecution. Now Bridges for Peace and Christian volunteers are there in Israel, to feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, clothe, house and give blankets to the needy. Those who work for Bridges for Peace, who live in Israel, distribute items to the poor. Those who live in other countries, and who support Bridges for Peace, can make donations. The money is used to buy what is needed, then the goods are given to our brother and sisters in need. When we donate to this worthy cause, we are truly storing up our treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20).

If it were not for the Jews, we Gentiles would not have our salvation and we would all be facing eternity without God. Thank God for the Jews! To support Israel and the Jewish people returning there, contact Bridges for Peace directly or as a link on our website.

Amen and God bless you, as you bless Israel.

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