

**WHY CARE
ABOUT ISRAEL**

WHY CARE ABOUT ISRAEL IN GOD'S REDEMPITIVE PLAN FOR ALL NATIONS

BECAUSE WE LOVE JESUS

If we love Jesus, then we should love Israel – both the *land* and the *people*. Jesus is a Jewish Man who is still alive today. He didn't stay dead, and He's not staying in heaven forever – He is returning to the planet and has a great future in store for all of Israel. Additionally, His purposes for Israel are directly connected to the Gentiles and the great commission.

We should not exalt Israel as a point unto itself. We exalt *Jesus*, while recognizing that His covenants with Israel and His promises for the city of Jerusalem are central to the Biblical narrative. We care deeply about Israel *because we care about Jesus*.

Reading the covenantal Scriptures from start to finish gives us an abundantly clear picture of God's thoughts, emotions, and plans regarding His people Israel: *He loves them with an everlasting love*.

This reason alone should compel us to care about Israel – because we want to love what He loves. Yet, here's a few more baseline reasons why any believer should care about Israel.

BECAUSE WE LOVE THE KINGDOM OF GOD

If we love the Kingdom of God, then we should care about Israel. No matter what nation or ethnicity we come from, we should care about Israel because Jesus is going to bring His Kingdom to the earth and because He will restore everything to what He wanted from the Garden of Eden.

This is a central point we must not overlook when we talk about the Kingdom: At the center of all the prophetic Scriptures' thrust is a Jewish King from the seed of David who will reign forever from Jerusalem with a government that will have no end.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is resurrected from the dead and is presently in heaven in His glorified body, at the right hand of the Father. *But He is not staying in heaven forever*. He is there until "the time of the restoration of all things" (Acts 2) – but then He will return from heaven and come to Zion (Zech. 1:16; 2:10).

Jesus will rule on the throne of David forever (2 Sam. 7, Ps. 132) and all the nations will stream to the mountain of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem (Is. 2). Jesus' Kingdom will be on the earth as it is in heaven (Mat. 6).

A Return to the Garden & Global Restoration

Isaiah 66 speaks of a new heavens and earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3). The whole earth will be filled with God's glory as the waters cover the sea. Revelation 21 speaks of the New Jerusalem descending down to earth. Psalm 132 tells us that God will make His eternal dwelling place in Zion. Thus, we find a critical connection here between Jerusalem and God's house of prayer for all nations.

Isaiah 56 tells us that God will draw all nations to His holy mountain. His house will be a house of prayer for all nations. The Gentiles will stream to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem year after year (Is. 2, Mic. 4, Zech. 14). The Lord Jesus will be King over all the earth, and there will be an enduring time of peace when the nations will learn war no more.

This is all ultimately about a return to the Garden and God's dwelling place on the earth. We cannot overlook the Biblical connections between the Garden of Eden, the house of prayer for all nations, the resting place of God, the mountain of God, the city of Jerusalem, and the coming kingdom. We ultimately desire one thing – to see the beauty and glory of Jesus on the earth, reigning in and over His cosmic temple (Psalm 27:4, Isaiah 6, Zechariah 6:13, Ezekiel 40-48).

God wants to dwell with people on the earth. Therefore Israel is important in this grand narrative because we need the redemption of the land and of the people for the fullness to come about.

We cannot quickly skim over this important facet of Jesus' return so clearly outlined in the Holy Scriptures. Don't miss out on this colossal and central part of His redemptive narrative. There's so much glory coming to the earth – and it's deeply connected to Jesus' beloved and eternal city: Jerusalem.

BECAUSE WE LOVE WORSHIP & PRAYER

If we care about worship and prayer, then we should love Israel. The Scriptures command us to "sing on behalf of Judah" (Jer. 31) and to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122). Israel was made to be a singing people: "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of the Lord" (Jer. 31). "Out of them shall come songs of thanksgiving, and the voices of those who celebrate." (Jer. 30:13) God will redeem Israel back to their original identity (Ex. 19:6) to be a kingdom of priests to Him.

In the latter days, the Lord will establish the mountain of His house, his house of prayer for all nations (Is. 56), as the highest mountain (Is. 2).

On Earth As in Heaven

In Matthew 6, Jesus taught us to pray “Let Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.” Revelation 4 & 5 tells us that there is unceasing ministry to God happening from every person and creature. Revelation 7 speaks of a great multitude in the heavenly throne room of people from every nation, tribe, and language praising and worshiping Jesus. So what is being done in heaven that is not being done on earth? *Unceasing worship from every tribe and language.*

The Bible promises a movement of worship from every tribe, tongue, and nation – *that it would be on earth as it is in heaven.* This is a critical part of global missions.

Songs From the Ends of the Earth

Isaiah speaks of a new song before the coming of the LORD. He prophesied of singing watchmen from the ends of the earth (Is. 24, 42, 52, 62), who will prepare the way of the Lord (Is. 40). These prophetic intercessors, songbirds, and messengers will agree with the unsilent heart of God for Jerusalem – *until it is made a praise in the earth.* Jerusalem will not be a praise in the earth until Jesus returns to the earth and is King of all the nations from His throne in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 62 in its fullness is a millennial passage. This simply means that in its ultimate fulfillment it is speaking of the coming glory of Jerusalem when Jesus has returned and set up His kingdom on the earth. There will not be permanent peace in Jerusalem until Jesus returns and rules on the earth. Therefore God will raise up watchmen who will give him no rest day or night until Jerusalem is a praise in the earth – then there will be peace – not only for Jerusalem, but for the whole earth!

Malachi 1:11 promises pure incense from every place, from the rising of the sun to its going down. We will see a great acceleration of this promise at this present time. But again, this is ultimately a millennial passage. The fullness of this promise will be expressed in the coming age when Jesus rules on the earth over every other nation from Jerusalem. All kings will sing to Him (Ps. 138:4, Ps. 66:4, Ps. 72:11) and the governments of the earth will offer their pure incense night and day. Revelation 5 gives us a picture of the heavenly reality – music and prayer that never stops. It tells us that incense = the prayers of the saints.

This gives great purpose to our mission even now in this age, to prepare the way of the Lord and build towards this epic future.

BECAUSE WE LOVE GLOBAL MISSIONS

If we love God's redemptive plan for all nations, we must love Israel. We should not pray for Israel as something disconnected from God's big plan; We pray for Israel *in the context of God's missional intent for all nations*. God wants to redeem all nations through His purposes for this one nation, and for this one nation to be redeemed by the fullness of the gospel going to all nations (Romans 9-11).

The Scriptures tell us that all of Israel cannot be saved until the fullness of the Gentiles comes about. There's still much to be done to see the fullness of the Gentiles come about. Today, over 3 billion people have still yet to hear of Jesus. There's numerous unreached and unengaged people groups. The gospel is most certainly advancing, but there's still much progress to be had for the gospel of the Kingdom to be proclaimed in all the world.

The fullness of the Gentiles will, in turn, lead to all of Israel's salvation, as the Deliver returns to Zion.

Jesus has a beautiful plan for Jew and Gentile together in His one storyline and one family. There is one body (one church) of which Jesus is the head. We, Jew and Gentile both, find our hope in Jesus alone.

BECAUSE WE LOVE THE SCRIPTURES

If we love the Scriptures, then we will love Israel. God has made an eternal covenant with Israel. It is hard to ignore how much God speaks about his enduring faithful love to Israel and the many promises to (1) restore them from disobedience, (2) bring them back from a final captivity, and (3) establish them forever in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

With the miraculous reestablishment and regathering of Israel in 1948, it sets the stage for the fullness of the Biblical promises to come about. We are living in an unprecedented time.

BECAUSE WE ARE BELIEVERS IN THE NEW COVENANT

As believers in the new covenant, we should love Israel. We must realize that the "new covenant" was made specifically with the house of Israel and Judah. It was first spoken about through the prophet Jeremiah:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...this is the covenant that I will

make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people...for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer. 31)

This is the new covenant which the blood of Jesus was shed for:

"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28)

Jesus has atoned for their iniquity through His own blood, as though a Lamb who was slaughtered for the whole nation, and will impute His everlasting righteousness to the remnant who calls upon His name (Dan. 9:24; Jer. 50:20; Rom. 11:26-27). Jesus is the Bridegroom who has died in the place of His bride and taken the curse of the covenant upon Himself, making a way for a new and everlasting covenant in His blood. Jesus will heal Israel's incurable wound (Jer. 30:12 and 30:17), and make their red-stained sins washed white as snow (Is. 1:18). He will "remove the iniquity of the land in one day" (Zech. 3:9) as He remembers their sin no more: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:34). He will be their God and they will be His people, forever.

Now don't get confused...the new covenant doesn't make the promises to Abraham obsolete. In fact, it's just the opposite: the blood of Jesus is actually the only way Israel can step into their eternal inheritance promised long ago to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Mosaic Law only more deeply revealed the need for an eternal and everlasting righteousness to be imputed to the inside of a person. The old covenant would never suffice to lead Israel (or any human) into inheriting the promises. (Hence the need for a perfectly righteous sacrifice not based on man's own works). But, we have to realize the promises made to Abraham are not synonymous with the old covenant; rather, they were made *hundreds of years before* the Mosaic old covenant even came into existence:

"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made...And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made..."

It's beautiful that there's a growing number of Jewish believers in Jesus today, but many Jewish people (both in the land of Israel and around the world) are still living under the curses of the old Mosaic covenant. But the Bible promises that all of Israel will one day be saved, forgiven, and all walk in righteousness. This can only happen by the blood of the new covenant in Jesus. There is no other way except through Him.

BECAUSE GOD IS FAITHFUL

God's promises made to His friend Abraham long ago are still in full effect — and the blood of the new covenant is the only way Israel will walk in their promised destiny. The promises made to Abraham and the nation of Israel were never based upon their own works — it was solely based on the eternal and unconditional faithfulness of the LORD Himself. It's an election of grace. Apart from that, all man's works are like filthy rags that will never amount to anything.

We then, as believing Gentiles, must see our inseparable connection to the covenantal people as we presently find ourselves vessels of His mercy, enjoying the sweet fellowship and forgiveness because of the blood of Jesus — finding ourselves aching and longing for Israel (the root that supports us, Rom. 11:18) to come to their Maker who spilled His atoning blood for them.

If God has cast away Israel for good, then He is a liar and an unfaithful Bridegroom. But He hasn't cast them off forever (Rom. 11:1). Yes, He has temporarily and partially blinded them (see Rom. 11:25: "*until*" and "*in part*"), but is eagerly anticipating the day He will restore them. He actually burns with great zeal and jealous desire for Jerusalem (Zech. 1:14-15; 8:2-3). He speaks night after night and day after day (Ps. 19), and does not keep silent for the sake of Jerusalem (Is. 62). He is summoning the whole earth (Ps. 50) to hear His voice calling out and agree with Him.

At the end of the day, it's not even about Israel. It is ultimately about the namesake of the LORD. He could have chosen whoever He wanted — it's not because Israel was more special than anyone else (Deut. 7:7). God had zeal in His heart to make His name great on the earth and chose Israel to play a special role in this grand story. So, if you have a problem with Israel, it really means you have a problem with God. That's the deeper root. So, if you have disagreement and offense in your heart regarding His choosing, then repent of that unbelief and turn to His ways — His infinitely deep wisdom and knowledge (Rom. 11:33).

God will be found true and every man found a liar (Rom. 3:4). So, let's not resist His plan — let's agree with Him and His covenantal election today.

SUMMARY OF WHY ALL BELIEVERS SHOULD CARE ABOUT ISRAEL

- **Because we love Jesus and His mission** – we love Israel because we love Jesus and His plan
- **Because we love the Kingdom of God** – heaven is coming to the earth Jesus will reign out of Zion forever
- **Because we love worship and prayer** – God’s family is a house of prayer for all nations and there will be enduring songs from the ends of the earth
- **Because we love global missions** – we care about all nations, unreached people groups, and languages. The fullness of the Gentiles must happen before all of Israel’s salvation
- **Because we love the Scriptures** – we believe the word of God and all His promises
- **Because we are believers in the new covenant** – Jesus shed His blood for all peoples; but specifically for His bride, Israel.
- **Because God is faithful**

HOW DO WE RESPOND & LIVE?

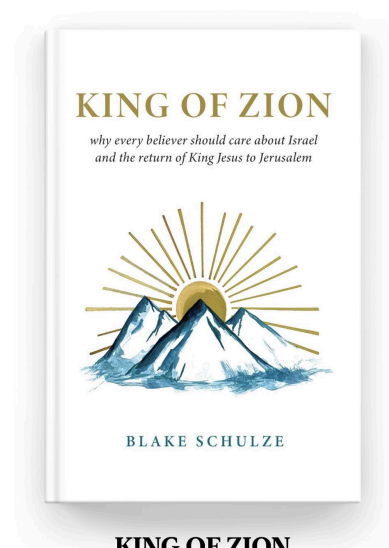
We should live with great humility (Rom. 11:18, 20, 25) and marvel at God’s plan (Rom. 11:33). Therefore, we should be living sacrifices for God’s glory (Rom. 12:1). The global church should give herself wholeheartedly to Jesus’ mission – for His name to be made great in every place and for all nations to worship Him. We should be “watchmen on the wall” night and day for the sake of Jerusalem, until God accomplishes His full purposes and establishes His Kingdom here.

Until the return of the King,

–Blake

Find out more by reading ***King of Zion***
(available in print, audiobook, and ebook formats)

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KING OF ZION
Why Every Believer Should Care About
Israel and the Return of King Jesus to
Jerusalem
Blake Schulze >

