

Is God finished with Israel?

There are many Christians who think that God is no longer covenantally committed to Israel and that Christians have replaced Israel as God's covenant people. This is known as replacement theology. But, is this the case? No!

God's plan for Israel includes their eventual restoration.

Romans 11:25-29

1. (25-27) The promise that all Israel will be saved.

VERSES 25-27- 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; ²⁶ and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." ²⁷ "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

Paul is saying in the strongest way possible he does not want his readers to be ignorant of what he is about to explain. Clearly the truth Paul is about to reveal must be very important. This is a warning to take this soberly. Christians must not **be ignorant of this mystery**.

Blindness/Partial hardening in part has happened to Israel: Paul summarizes his point from Romans 11:11-24. With the picture of the tree and the branches, Paul reminds the Gentile Christians that it is only by God's grace that they can be grafted into the "tree" of God – the "root" of which is Israel.

God's purpose in allowing blindness/partial hardening **in part** to come upon Israel is so that the **fullness of the Gentiles** can **come in**.

Israel's **blindness/partial hardening** is temporary. "One day the Jews will realize their blindness and folly. They'll accept Jesus Christ, and the glorious national restoration of these people will bring in the Kingdom Age."

Until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in: At that time, God will once again turn the attention of His plan of the ages specifically on Israel again, so that **all Israel will be saved**.

All Israel will be saved: This **all Israel** is not "spiritual Israel.

The phrase *spiritual Israel* is used in two primary contexts. The first is as a reference to the entire body of Christian believers, in distinction to the political or racial people of Israel. *Spiritual Israel* is also sometimes used to suggest concepts related to replacement theology, in which the promises directed toward Israel are now given to the Church, instead.

RT- Teaches that God has abandoned the promises made to the Jews and has replaced the Jews with Christian as His chosen people. Replacement theology is the teaching that the Christian church has replaced national Israel regarding the plan, purpose, and promises of God. Therefore, many of the promises that God made to Israel must be spiritualized. For example, when it speaks of Israel being restored to the land, this really means that the Christian church will be blessed.

" It isn't "spiritual Israel" in Romans 11:25, because that Israel is spiritually blind. Therefore, we shouldn't regard it as spiritual Israel in Romans 11:26.

There is a distinction between national or ethnic Israel and spiritual Israel. Paul makes this clear in Galatians 3:6-8 and other passages. Nevertheless, God still has a purpose and a plan for ethnic Israel and will bring salvation to them.

Galatians 3:6-8-⁶ Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ⁷ Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸ The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU."

Therefore be sure: The emphasis is clear. Paul made an important point, and he wanted each one of his readers to understand it.

Only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham: Since Abraham was made righteous by **faith** and not by works, Abraham was therefore the father of everyone who believes God and is accounted righteous.

Are sons of Abraham: This was a strong rebuke to the Jewish Christians who tried to bring Gentile Christians under the law. They believed they were superior because they descended from Abraham and observed the law. Paul said that the most important link to Abraham was not the link of *genetics* and not the link of *works*, **but it is the link of faith.**

Illustration: This would have been a shocking change of thinking for these particular opponents of Paul. They deeply believed that they had a standing before God because they were genetically descended from Abraham. At that time, some Jewish Rabbis

taught that Abraham stood at the gates of Hell just to make sure that none of his descendants accidentally slipped by. John the Baptist dealt with this same thinking when he said, Do not think to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones (Matthew 3:9). Paul knocked down their blind reliance on genetic relation to Abraham and showed that what really mattered was faith in Jesus.

It's the same today when people believe God accepts them because they come from a Christian family. God is a Father, not a grandfather; everyone must have their *own* faith in God.

Are sons of Abraham: This was a great comfort to the Gentile Christians who were regarded as "second class Christians" by others. Now they could know that they had a real, important link to Abraham and could consider themselves **sons of Abraham**. Sadly, Christians have taken this glorious truth and misapplied it through the centuries. This has been a verse that many claim in support of *replacement theology* – the idea that God is *finished* with the people of Israel as a nation or a distinct ethnic group, and that the Church spiritually inherits all the promises made to Israel.

Replacement theology has done tremendous damage in the Church, providing the theological fuel for the fires of horrible persecution of the Jews. If Galatians 3:7 were the only verse in the Bible speaking to the issue, there might be a place for saying that the Church has completely replaced Israel. But we understand the Bible according to its entire message, and allow one passage to give light to others.

Romans 11:25-29- states clearly that God is *not* finished with Israel as a nation or a distinct ethnic group. Even though God has turned the focus of His saving mercies away from Israel on to the Gentiles, He will turn it back again. This simple passage refutes those who insist that God is forever done with Israel as Israel, and that the Church is the New Israel and inherits every promise ever made to national and ethnic Israel of the Old Testament.

We are reminded of the enduring character of the promises made to national and ethnic Israel (such as Genesis 13:15 and Genesis 17:7-8).

Genesis 13:14-16-¹⁴ The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵ for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your ^[e]descendants forever. ¹⁶ I will make your ^[f]descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your ^[g]descendants can also be numbered.

Genesis 17:7-8--⁷ I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your ^[b]descendants after you. ⁸ I will give to you and to your ^[c]descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

God is not "finished" with Israel, and Israel is not "spiritualized" as the church. While we do see and rejoice in a continuity of God's work throughout all His people through all generations, we still see a distinction between Israel and the Church – a distinction that Paul understands well.

All who put their faith in Jesus Christ **are sons of Abraham**; but Abraham has his *spiritual* sons and his *genetic* sons, and God has a plan and a place for both. Yet no one can deny that it is far more important to be a *spiritual* son of Abraham than a *genetic* son.

We also know this is not "spiritual Israel" because Paul says this is a **mystery** – and it is no **mystery** that *spiritual* Israel will be saved.

Romans 11:16- Will be saved: This states clearly for us that God is *not* finished with Israel as a nation or a distinct ethnic group. Though God has turned the focus of His saving mercies away from Israel specifically and onto the Gentiles generally, He will turn it back again.

This does not mean there will be a time when every last person of Jewish descent will be saved. Instead, this is a time when Israel as a whole will be a saved people, and when the nation as a whole (especially its leadership) embraces Jesus Christ as Messiah.

And, when **all Israel will be saved**, they will be saved through embracing Jesus Christ as Messiah – as unlikely as this seems.

The Bible indicates this is a necessary condition for the return of Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:39, Zechariah 12:10-11).

Matthew 23:37-39-³⁷ "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. ³⁸ Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! ³⁹ For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'"

Jesus here revealed something of the conditions surrounding His Second Coming. When Jesus comes again, the Jewish people will welcome Him as the Messiah saying, **"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"**

It will take a great deal to bring Israel to that point, but God will do it. It is promised that Israel will welcome Jesus back, even as the Apostle Paul said in [Romans 11:26](#): And so all Israel will be saved.

Zechariah 12:10-11- "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. ¹¹ In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the ^[b]plain of Megiddo.

Part of this great outpouring of strength and might to defend Jerusalem will be an outpouring of the **Spirit** – but also **grace and supplication**. God will move among Israel and bring saving grace and repentant prayer.

As Jerusalem is supernaturally defended and the Spirit is poured out on the nation, *they will turn to Jesus*, the **pierced** One. His head was **pierced** with thorns, His hands and feet were **pierced** with nails, and a spear **pierced** His side.

They will turn away from their trust in the foolish, worthless shepherd and turn their focus on the good shepherd. When we see Jesus crucified – understanding why He went to the cross and what He accomplished there – we are drawn to Him in humble repentance ([John 12:32](#))

They will look on Him **whom they pierced**. They will realize that **they** did it and that they bear responsibility – not sole responsibility, but responsibility nonetheless – for the crucifixion of their Savior.

They will mourn: The Jewish people will turn to Jesus in repentance, mourning their past rejection of Him. The mourning will be deep, as if for an **only son**, the **firstborn**. **Firstborn** was synonymous with the most beloved.

This will fulfill the amazing promise of [Romans 11:26](#) (*And so all Israel will be saved*) and many other passages that tell us that before the physical return of Jesus to this earth, the Jewish people – as a whole – will welcome Him as their Lord and Savior. The whole context of [Zechariah 12](#) puts this radical conversion in the setting of miraculous deliverance from an attack from the nations.

They will look.... they will mourn: Here we see the pattern for coming to Jesus and true repentance. *First*, we look to Jesus, *then* we mourn for our sins. *Looking to Jesus must come first*. The Father sends the Spirit so that men will look upon the Son.

Jesus will not return again until God turns the focus of His saving mercies on Israel again, and Israel responds to God through Jesus Christ.

g. **The Deliverer will come out of Zion:** The quotations from Isaiah show that God still has a redeeming work to accomplish with Israel, and that it will not be left undone.

It is apparent that God is not finished with Israel. Paul tells us that a partial hardening has happened to Israel. This is so the Gentiles can be included in the covenantal faithfulness of God in his redemptive work. This was prophesied in Genesis 12:3 and reiterated in Galatians 3:8. In those two verses, God says that in Abraham all the nations will be blessed. Paul quotes Gen. 12:3 in Galatians and calls it the gospel.

Obviously, God in his great and sovereign plan has worked all things after the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11) so that the Gentiles would be saved. When the time of the Gentiles is over, God will move upon Israel. They will accept Jesus as the Messiah, and they will become a great and powerful nation used by God.

What is replacement theology? by Matt Slick

Replacement theology is the teaching that the Christian church has replaced national Israel regarding the plan, purpose, and promises of God. Therefore, many of the promises that God made to Israel must be spiritualized. For example, when it speaks of Israel being restored to the land, this really means that the Christian church will be blessed. Also, covenants made with Israel are fulfilled in the Christian church so, for example,

1. The Jewish people are no longer God's chosen people. Instead, the Christian church now makes up God's chosen people.
2. In the New Testament after Pentecost, the term "Israel" refers to the church.
3. The Mosaic covenant (Exodus 20) is replaced by the new covenant (Luke 22:20).
4. Actual circumcision is replaced by a circumcision of the heart (Rom. 2:29).

So, in replacement theology, the church has replaced Israel as the primary means by which the world is blessed by God's work. Though it is true that the church does replace Israel in some areas such as properly representing God on earth, acknowledging the promise of the Messiah, etc., it is not biblical to say that God is completely done with Israel and that the Christian church is its complete replacement.

"For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will remove ungodliness from Jacob,'" (Rom. 11:25-26).

Some replacement theologians would teach that any mention of "Israel" after Acts chapter 2 (Pentecost) would be referring to the Christian church, but the above Scripture cannot be used to support that idea. In fact, it plainly contradicts it. Obviously, God is not done with Israel. The text tells us that God has hardened Israel but it also tells us that this hardening is temporary.

Replacement theology is also known as supersessionism which means that the Christian church has superseded Israel in God's plan.