

Why Focus on Israel?

It is impossible to read the Bible and not come away without seeing the central part Israel and Jewish people play in God's revelation to the world. Tragically, though, many within the Christian world have blinded themselves to the place of Israel as a nation and the Jewish people (ethnically) have in the plan of God by postulating a *replacement theology* or *supersessionism*.

"R.K. Soulen, in his work, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, suggests that we understand supersessionism in three types. First, there is punitive supersessionism, which says that God has rejected the Jews because of their rejection of Christ. The catastrophes of 70 AD and 135 AD were the political expressions of a fundamental divine abandonment of Israel in punishment for her rejection of Christ. As a result, God has turned his back on the Jews and has embraced the Gentile church in their place. More potent and far reaching than punitive supersessionism, however, is economic supersessionism which argues that the entire economy, or dispensation, of Israel, from Sinai to Christ, was designed by God as a transitory symbol or type of an eternal, spiritual religion revealed by Christ and embodied in Christianity. The nationalist, ethnic, physical defining features of Judaism are all, like the entire story of Old Testament Israel, a carnal symbol divinely intended to pass away when God brought the eternal spiritual antitype, the church, into being. Finally, Soulen notes, we pass on to the most deeply embedded form of supersessionism—structural supersessionism—in which Scripture is habitually read with the distinctly Jewish or Israelitish elements of Scripture a mere background to the biblical story which moves primarily from universal creation to universal consummation by way of universal sin and universal redemption. Israel per se is not really even in the main story of the Bible."

"Because of the fact that supersessionism is traditionally structured deeply into Christian thought, the question of a future for Israel is traditionally met with automatic rejection if not incomprehension. However, supersessionism lives in Christian theology today purely on the momentum of its own tradition. Developments in the twentieth-century have undercut its supposed historical and biblical bases. Supersessionists believed that the catastrophes of 70 and 135 AD signaled God's intention to make a complete end of Israel as a political, national entity. The dramatic establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 under God's providence has belied that notion. Supersessionists developed ways of reading the Bible that not only eliminated Israel from the main story, but turned it into a symbol of the Gentile church and the spiritual realities which characterized the church's supposed future. They believed that the New Testament clearly set forth the spiritual religion of Christianity to which the Old Testament covenants, promises, and narrative related as a symbol."

Dr. Craig Blaising, *The Future of Israel as a Theological Question*, Presented to The National Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, November 19, 2000, Nashville, Tennessee

The need to counteract this erroneous understanding and false teaching is summed up in the following quote:

"Sadly, the Christian Church, for the most part, only partially understands Israel's calling and mission. There is a veil over the minds and hearts of most of the Jewish people so that they still neither see nor hear the things of Christ. There is also a veil over the minds and hearts of many within the Christian Church so that they fail to understand what Scripture says about God's on-going purpose for His covenant People. They fail to recognize what God is doing through them, in challenging the nations to faith in God."

"Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees for being unable to 'interpret the signs of the times.' They could not see what God was doing in their midst. Surely, that rebuke can be addressed to his Church today. So why is there such blindness?..."

"Sadly, it is because in her sin the Church is proud. In her pride she has frequently, from early times, claimed that the Church has replaced Israel as the chosen people of God. Professor David Flusser of Jerusalem stresses this point in his Introduction to *Israel: God's Key*, quoted earlier. The church has all too often claimed that God has finished with Israel because of her rejection of Christ. As pointed out in the chapters, 'The Mystery of Israel' and 'Is the Church the New Israel?', this is a failure to understand the grace of God and the nature of Christ's atonement..."

"It is because the Church and its members have frequently been anti-Semitic..."

David M. Torrance & George Taylor, *Israel God's Servant: God's Key to the Redemption of the World*, Paternoster, 2007, page 5-6

1) Salvation is of the Jews - *"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews."* John 4:22

- A. Personal salvation is through a Jew (Jesus) - Romans 10:1-4; 9-13 - the context of this very familiar and widely used scripture is addressed to Jewish people.
- B. World-wide salvation is through the Jews

Genesis 12:3, Ezekiel 36:22-23

"The mission of the Church is to evangelize the world with a view to the gathering in of individuals out of all nations into its fold, but it is reserved for restored and converted Israel as a nation to bring the nations to a knowledge of their glorious Messiah and King, and bring universal blessing to the world."

David Baron, *Israel in the Plan of God*, (Grand Rapids: Kregels Publ., 1983), page 283

Romans 1:16, 11:11-15

"In Romans 1:16, Paul says, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone: both to the Jew first and to the Greek.' Most translations read, 'first for the Jew, then for the Greek.' That is to say, most translations miss out the word 'both' (te), presumably because it does not read especially well in English. However, as C.E.B. Cranfield points out in his commentary, the word 'both' serves to stress that the salvation of Christ is for everyone. As far as God is concerned, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, when it comes to their need for salvation. Jesus loves both Jew and Gentile in equal measure. He died for Jew and Gentile alike, and is determined that both share in the benefits of his salvation. Nonetheless, Paul inserts the word 'first' (proton) to indicate that there is more to God's purposes than equality. Cranfield explains that 'within the framework of this basic equality there is a certain undeniable priority of the Jew.' The meaning and the implications of this priority are unwrapped by Paul in Romans 9 - 11 and have much to do with the ordering and organization of salvation history, as God steers it. The word 'first' is not simply to be understood chronologically, but also theologically."

David W. Torrance & George Taylor, *Israel God's Servant: God's Key to the Redemption of the World*, Paternoster Press, 2007, page 157

- C. Israel (Jews) being the center of individual and world-wide salvation in God's plan is the cause of the satanic anti-Semitism that has plagued the world since the calling of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genesis 12:3 The blessing and the cursing on how you treat Israel and Jewish people is likely because God realized the satanic hatred that would be the lot of Israel and Jewish people and thus God gave an impetus to treat Israel/Jews with good for blessing, and with bad, there will be cursing.

Zechariah 2:8 *"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth **the apple of his eye.**"*

ISBE: The eyeball, or globe of the eye, with pupil in center, called "apple" from its round shape. Its great value and careful protection by the eyelids automatically closing when there is the least possibility of danger made it the emblem of that which was most precious and jealously protected.

1. It is protected

The eye is one of the most vulnerable organs in our bodies. It is also one of the most loved and valuable. The pupil is protected by the strong frontal bones (to protect against a blow); the brow and the eyelash (to protect against dust); the lid (to protect against painful glare; tear-glands (to provide cleansing).

2. There is a reflection of yourself when you look into someone's pupil.

The "apple of his [God's] eye" is Israel. If you look into God's pupil, as it were, you would see Israel.

Anti-Semitism, in all forms, thus, is fighting against God.

2) Scripture is of the Jews - *"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."* Romans 3:1-2

A. Approximately 85% of the Bible is about Israel and the Jewish people.

B. The (human) authors of Scripture are Jewish - Romans 3:1-2

What about Luke?

Reasons why he is a Gentile.

1. Church tradition
2. Colossians 4:10-11 (Aristarchus, Marcus and Justus are referred to as "the circumcision")
Colossians 4:14 (Luke is mentioned but not with "the circumcision" group)
Luke, then, must be a gentile.
3. Luke is a gentile name (but Aristarchus, Marcus, Justus, and Paul are gentile names)
4. Luke was a physician.

Reasons why he is Jewish.

1. Romans 3:1-2
2. Luke 1:1-2 Luke says he was part of the "us" who were eyewitnesses of things concerning Jesus. The "us" would certainly be Jewish followers of Jesus
3. Luke 1:8-20 Luke had detailed knowledge of the Temple and priesthood. Would a gentile have this knowledge?
4. Luke 2:21-24 (How would Luke have intimate knowledge of Mary if he was a gentile?)
5. Luke 2:19,51 Acts 21:28-29 (if Luke was a gentile why did the Jewish people accuse Paul of bringing Trophimus into the Temple and not Luke?)

R. Wayne Stacy has a good article on Luke being Jewish at <http://www.rwaynestacy.com/2011/03/was-luke-gentile.html>

C. The historical and cultural context of the Bible is Jewish

1. Christ our Passover - Matthew 26:17-30; 1 Corinthians 5:7

19 *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.*
20 *Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.*

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

2. Christ the Firstfruits - 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

3. Bride and Bridegroom - 2 Corinthians 11:2; Matthew 9:15

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

4. Born Again - 1 John 3:10

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

5. Books of the O.T. - Luke 24:44; Matthew 23:35 (Genesis 4 and 2 Chronicles 24)

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

3) Israel is the key to correct biblical understanding

"...the Holy Spirit is trying to say to all believers, right in the heart of your theology must be found the Jew. In the center of all your doctrines, ascertain God's purpose with Israel. Untold confusion and error have flown from failure to do this. Israel is the key to all dispensational arrangements. God's mystery of the ages will yield itself to no other key. Keep Israel in the center of your theological reckoning if a balance is to be maintained."

What it has cost the Church to withhold Christ from the Jews, Rev. Charles H. Stevens, D.D., Founder and first President of Piedmont Baptist Bible College, pamphlet, page 5, undated

A. Abrahamic Covenant - Genesis 12:1-3

"It is recognized by all serious students of the Bible that the covenant of God with Abraham is one of the important and determinative revelations of Scripture. It furnishes the key to the entire Old Testament and reaches for its fulfillment into the New.

The issue, in a word, is the question of whether Israel as a nation and as a race has a prophesied future. A literal interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant involves the permanent existence of Israel as a nation and the fulfillment of the promise that the land should be their everlasting possession."

Dr. John Walvoord, *Millennial Series: Part 12: The Abrahamic Covenant and Premillennialism*, <http://walvoord.com/article/49> comments:

"Yet another privilege was the covenants. All the covenants beginning with Abraham - the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New - were made with Israel. The first was wholly unconditional and one of promise. It is the all-embracing covenant, for according to it all the families of the earth are to be blessed in Abraham's seed, which is Christ. The Mosaic was a conditional covenant and hence was broken. The Palestinian made possession and occupancy of the land, the right of ownership to which was included in the Abrahamic covenant, contingent upon obedience to God while in the land. For this reason, Israel can now still have right of title to Palestine and yet not occupy it. It was a conditional covenant and was broken by Israel.

The Davidic covenant assured Israel that of the seed of David they would have a King to reign in Jerusalem during the millennial age. It was an unconditional covenant proceeding from God's tender love for David, a man after His own heart. The New was also an unconditional covenant, but it has never been received by Israel as a nation. This covenant assures redemption from sin through the Saviour Christ Jesus. All the unconditional covenants are still in force, because they are dependent upon God for their fulfillment; all the conditional covenants have been broken by the disobedience of Israel." *Dr. Charles Feinberg*

B. New Covenant - Jeremiah 31:31-34

- 31 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*
- 32 *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:*
- 33 *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; **and will be their God, and they shall be my people.***
- 34 *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

1. Seventeen references in the N.T.: Nine actual mentions - Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:8, 13; 9:15; and 12:24 and eight references - Romans 11:27; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6, 7, 10; 10:16, 29; 13:20.

2. The setting of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) is eschatological.

A. "I will be their God and they shall be my people" is eschatological -

Exodus 6:6-7

Leviticus 26:12

Jeremiah 7:23, 11:4, 24:7, 30:22, 31:1, 33, 32:38

Ezekiel 11:20, 36:28, 37:23, 27

Zechariah 8:8, 13:9

B. Exodus 6:6-7

- 6 *Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:*
- 7 *And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

C. 4 Cups of Wine (Juice) Partaken of at the Passover Seder

1. Cup of Sanctification
"I will bring you out"
2. Cup of Deliverance
"I will rid you out of their bondage"
3. Cup of Redemption
"I will redeem you"
4. Cup of Acceptance
"I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God."

4) The Church, though not unimportant, is a parenthetical focus in the plan of God.

"The notion that the present, interim age came about as a consequence of Israel's rejection of the kingdom offer in no way implies that it is an afterthought or less important in God's mind in comparison to His program with national Israel. On the contrary, according to Ephesians 3:11, the church was "in accordance" with God's "eternal purpose." In other words, God always knew and purposed that He would create and work through the church. Although Israel's program is revealed in the Old Testament, the church's program is unrevealed. However, this distinction does not mean that God's unrevealed program for the church is of less importance than His revealed program for Israel. Furthermore, although the church represents an interruption or parenthesis between God's past and future dealings with Israel, this in no way implies that the church is of lesser importance than God's past or future dealings with national Israel. The dictionary definition of a parenthesis simply conveys the idea of an interval rather than something of less importance. Thus, understanding the church as a parenthetical break in this manner in no way suggests that the church represents "plan B" in relation to God's purposes for Israel."

Dr. Andy Woods, <http://www.pre-trib.org/articles/view/the-coming-kingdom-6>

Presently, in the age of the church, God is calling out a "remnant of Jews," Romans 11:1-5, and a "remnant" of Gentiles, Acts 15:13-17.

The church is not mentioned in the earlier scriptures (Old Testament) and is brought into existence on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2. The church is removed from God's plan with the rapture, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Romans 11 addresses both Jews (11:1-5) and Gentiles (11:13) who are believers.

Romans 11:16-24

16 ***For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.***

"Dough," of course, is bread dough! A part of the dough was offered to God as a token that all of it was acceptable. The "firstfruit" evidently refers to the origin of the nation: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "Holy" has no reference to any moral quality, but to the fact that it was set apart for God. Now if the first fruit, or the first dough—that little bit of dough—was set apart for God, what about the whole harvest? Since Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were set apart for God, what about the nation? It all belongs to God, you see. God is not through with the nation Israel."

(McGee, J. V. Thru the Bible commentary. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. Vol. 4, Page 724. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

"The reference is to (Numbers 15:17-21). The first part of the dough was to be offered up to God as a symbol that the entire lump belonged to Him. The same idea was involved in the Feast of Firstfruits, when the priest offered a sheaf to the Lord as a token that the entire harvest was His (Lev 23:9-14). The basic idea is that when God accepts the part He sanctifies the whole. Applying this to the history of Israel, we understand Paul's argument. God accepted the founder of the nation, Abraham, and in so doing set apart his descendants as well. God also accepted the other patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, in spite of their sins or failings. This means that God must accept the "rest of the lump"—the nation of Israel." Warren Wiersbe, http://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1116-18

It is clear in the context that the "firstfruit" and the "root" represent the Abrahamic Covenant and the Patriarchs.

The "lump" and the "branches" represent the nation of Israel which is holy (chosen of God).

17 ***And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;***

"The olive tree represents in the broadest sense the people of God. In the Old Testament era, this was Israel, made up of both believers and unbelievers. It now is composed of the church in the broadest sense, made up of believers, but also of some that profess to believe, but are not true believers. These are the ones that Paul warns may be cut off. God is able to graft the Jews back into the people of God if they do not continue in their unbelief (11:23). But we need to stay focused on Paul's main purpose for this illustration, namely, to confront any spiritual pride on the part of Gentiles in the church; and, to confront any anti-Semitism stemming from such pride that would choke out zeal for evangelizing the Jews. Since the root of both problems was spiritual pride, we'll focus on how to guard against this dangerous sin." Steven Cole, http://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1116-18

If is a first class condition, which assumes that what follows is a fact. Indeed some of the branches, the natural Jews (Israel) were broken off by their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah. Notice that Paul makes clear that not all of the branches (the natural Jews) were broken off. This truth is also emphasized by his use of the phrase among them which refers to natural Jews who did believe in Messiah. There always had been a believing remnant in Israel.

Notice that the term "Broken off" is the equivalent of "fall" (Romans 11:11), "their failure" (Romans 11:12), and "their rejection" (Romans 11:15)."

http://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1116-18

The "*some of the branches be broken off,*" in the entire context of this passage, are the Jews (the nation, with an unbelieving majority) and the "wild olive tree" represents the "church," but primarily the Gentiles who make up the vast majority of the church, which receives the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant (spiritual blessings). It is likely that "*the branches broken off*" speak of the nation of Israel (represented here by unbelieving Jews) and that the "branches not broken off" would be Jewish believers in Jesus (the remnant spoken of in verses 1-5) who are part of the church.

18 ***Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.***

19 ***Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.***

20 ***Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:***

"Ryrie agrees that 'The olive tree is the place of privilege that was first occupied by the natural branches (the Jews). The wild branches are Gentiles who, because of the unbelief of Israel, now occupy the place of privilege. The root of the tree is the Abrahamic covenant that promised blessing to both Jew and Gentile through Christ.'" (Ryrie Study Bible)

A warning is given to the predominately Gentile church not to be "boastful" or "highminded (arrogant)" in speaking against Israel (Jews/branches).

21 ***For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.***

God set aside Israel in His plan because of their unbelief and He will do the same to the church (speaking primarily to the Gentile portion) if they become boastful and arrogant.

- 22 ***Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.***

Here we have a contrast between God's "goodness" and His "severity."
Israel's unbelief brought God's severity upon them.
God's goodness (usefulness) will remain with the church as long as the church remains useful.
If not, the church will be cut off.

- 23 ***And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.***

If Israel believes in Messiah, God will graft them back in to the Olive Tree. This is what God promises will happen (Isaiah 66:5-13; Ezekiel 39:25-29) and is detailed in later verses in this chapter.

- 24 ***For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?***

It is logical that if God can graft in a wild olive tree to a good olive tree, which is not normal, certainly He can graft the natural branches of the olive tree back in.

- 25 ***For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.***

Gentile believers are warned not to be ignorant because of their conceits of the mystery.

"Beloved, the church needs to remember that God is not finished with Israel. Anyone who teaches that is conceited and lacks understanding of the mystery in this passage! Replacement theology is such an aberrant conceited understanding, in which the basic premise is propounded that God is finished with Israel because the Church is now the Israel of God!" http://www.preceptaustin.org/romans_1117-33

The mystery is that ***"that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."***

The entire nation is not blind, only part of the nation.

What does the phrase "***UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in***" refer to?

Dr. Charles Feinberg summarizes the various viewpoints as follows: "Sanday and Headlam maintain that πληρωμα [fulness] refers to the Gentile world as a whole. Griffith Thomas refers the time to the close of the Gentile dispensation. Faber, Stifler, Brookes, and Chalmers are all of the opinion that the time referred to is identical with 'the times of the Gentiles.' Godet, after denoting the fulness of the Gentiles as the totality of the Gentile nations, designates the time as 'the times of the Gentiles.' Bosworth contends that reference is made to the large majority of the Gentile population of the world, while Govett thinks the phrase refers to the elect of this dispensation out of all nations. Moule holds that εισερχομαι ('be come in') refers to a time when the ingathering of the Gentile children of God will be not at an end, but running high."

The Mystery of Israel's Blindness, unpublished thesis filed in the Dallas Theological Seminary Library, pp. 69-70.

1. The traditional view

"When the two concepts, the times of the Gentiles and the fullness of the Gentiles are compared, it becomes evident that the times of the Gentiles is primarily a political term and has to do with the political overlordship of Jerusalem. By contrast, the term the fullness of the Gentiles refers to the present age in which Gentiles predominate in the church and far exceed Israel in present spiritual blessing. It becomes clear, therefore, that, while the two concepts may be contemporaneous at least for much of their fulfillment, the termini of the two periods are somewhat different. The times of the Gentiles will end only when Israel will permanently gain political control of Jerusalem at the second advent of Christ, whereas the fullness of the Gentiles will be completed when God's present task of winning Jew and Gentile to Christ is completed.

Dr. John Walvoord, "The Times of the Gentiles". Bibl Sac Vol 125. Issue 497. Page 9, 1968

2. A growing view

"The...view held by a growing number of Messianic and other evangelical believers sees the fullness of the Gentiles as referring to the faithfulness of the Gentile believers. In Romans 11:12 how much more their [Israel's] fullness? the word fullness has to do with the completion of Israel's calling, as opposed to their transgression and failure to do God's will (vv. 12,30). Thus the fullness of the Gentiles means Gentile believers will be faithful to fulfill their calling toward Israel: to make Israel jealous."

Sam Nadler, *The Fullness of the Gentiles: What it Really Means*,
<http://messianicassociation.org/ezone16-sn.fullness.htm>

3. Another possible view

- 1) Israel was preventing the gospel from going to the Gentiles.

"Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." 1 Thessalonians 2:16

- 2) The blindness upon Israel is national, as Israel was "set aside" in 70 A.D. nationally, and God started using the church in His plan. There were saved and unsaved in the nation of Israel.

- 3) Israel was set aside so the gospel would go to the Gentiles.

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."
Romans 11:11

"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief." Romans 11:30

- 4) The church (represented by the predominately Gentile make-up of the church) were, then, to "provoke to jealousy" Jews by sharing the gospel with them, Romans 11:11.

"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."
Romans 11:11

- 5) The church did not witness to the Jewish people because of their "high-mindedness," Romans 11:18-20.

Much of this "high-mindedness" can be attributed to replacement theology. What has occurred is that, like the Jews who forbade the gospel to go to Gentiles, the church has forbade (neglected) the gospel to go to the Jews. Consider the command of Romans 1:16.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

- 6) The "**mystery**" is "**that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.**" The mystery concerns national Israel coming to the Lord when the fullness of the Gentiles (in context representing the church) comes in.
- 7) The "fulness of the Gentile" is when their (the predominately Gentile made up church) disobedience has reached its pinnacle in not sharing the gospel with the Jewish people and God removes them from the earth (through the rapture) and returns to working through Israel.

26 **And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:**

When the "fulness of the Gentiles" occurs, after this Jesus returns and "all Israel is saved," (see Zechariah 12:10 and 13:7-9).

The termini of "*the fulness of the Gentiles*" is the same with the *Traditional View* (1) and *Another Possible View* (3), both seeing the termini as the rapture of the church. But, the catalyst for "*the fulness of the Gentiles*" is different. The *Traditional View* sees the catalyst as being the last person saved during the church age and then the rapture. *Another Possible View* sees the catalyst as the churches disobedience in not witnessing to Jewish people (Romans 1:16 and 11:11, 30-31) and God, as He did with disobedient Israel, removes the church and continues His plan with Israel.

"So, the phrase "*The fullness of the Gentiles*" is not predicting a number in God's mind of Gentile conversions that, when reached, will cause Him to rapture away the Church. Nor does it speak of a Gentile Church Age. This phrase speaks of the time when the institutional church will have reached the pinnacle of their failure of not sharing the Gospel with Jewish people which will result in God removing the true believing church (the rapture) in preparation for His final Judgment of the unbelieving world."

Ken Symes, "*The Fulness of the Gentiles*," *Israel's Messenger*, Summer, 2018

It is a mistake to suppose that the Divine order "*to the Jew first*" has ever been annulled or reversed. "*To the Jew first*" as an individual in this dispensation, and as a nation in the millennial era, is God's plan; and the neglect of this order has been followed by disastrous results. Indeed, it is probable that the neglect of this Divine order, the culpable neglect by the Church of Christ will be the secondary cause for closing this dispensation in corruption and judgment. The Church ought to have observed this order all through this dispensation, but has failed; the Lord Himself will see that this arrangement is carried out on His return to bless the world."

John Wilkinson, *Israel My Glory*, (London: Mildmay Mission to the Jews, New and Revised Edition, 1921), page 162

5) God's promises to Israel are eternal

"It is recognized by all serious students of the Bible that the covenant of God with Abraham is one of the important and determinative revelations of Scripture. It furnishes the key to the entire Old Testament and reaches for its fulfillment into the New. In the controversy between premillenarians and amillenarians, the interpretation of this covenant more or less settles the entire argument. The analysis of its provisions and the character of their fulfillment set the mold for the entire body of Scriptural truth.

The issue, in a word, is the question of whether Israel as a nation and as a race has a prophesied future. A literal interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant involves the permanent existence of Israel as a nation and the fulfillment of the promise that the land should be their everlasting possession."

Dr. John Walvoord, *Millennial Series: Part 12: The Abrahamic Covenant and Premillennialism*, <http://walvoord.com/article/49>

"In any reasonable historical-grammatical approach to God's promises about the land and to the authors intention (both the divine and the human author must be in our purview), it would seem that Israel and her land are going to be unique in perpetuity The one cannot be without the other."

David Larsen, *Jews, Gentiles, and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1995), page 22

Malachi 3:6

Jeremiah 31:10; 35-37 (see Jeremiah 33:19-22, 25-26)

Ezekiel 36:19-22

Romans 11:25-29

6) Israel is the sign of the times and one **MUST** understand Israel to understand end time prophecy.

Matthew 16:

- 1 *The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.*
- 2 *He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.*
- 3 *And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?*

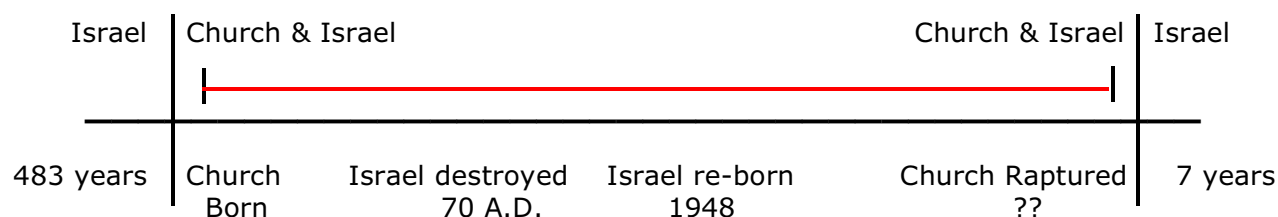
Ezekiel 37:8

Zephaniah 2:1-2

Isaiah 11:10-12

The consistent, biblical teaching is that God's plan is centered around Israel and the Jewish people and He will remove the church before His final consummation of His plan - Daniel 9:24-27.

Putting Israel into perspective as the CENTER of God's plan for the world would settle the question of the timing of the rapture. As the church wasn't around during the first 483 years of Daniel's prophecy, so the church won't be around during the last 7 years of Daniel's prophecy. This requires a pre-Tribulation rapture.



Red line is the Church age

7) Blessing to individuals and nations comes through our treatment of Israel and Jewish people.

Genesis 12:3

"God's glorious purpose has always been salvation for all nations (cf. Genesis 12:3). From the beginning "all peoples" have been within the purview of His gracious redemption, and Israel was called to be the prime instrument."

David Larsen, Jews, Gentiles & the Church, page 333

"God's being magnified in the earth is contingent upon the conversion of Israel...God's glory, as far as this earth is concerned, is wrapped up with the Jewish people. This being a fact, we can understand why He is so very greatly interested in them and in bringing them back to Himself."

David L. Cooper, Preparing for the World-Wide Revival (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1938) page 8

Romans 1:16; Acts 17:1-2

"As far as God is concerned, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, when it comes to their need for salvation. Jesus loves both Jew and Gentile in equal measure. He died for Jew and Gentile alike, and is determined that both share in the benefits of his salvation. Nevertheless, Paul inserts the word 'first' (proton) to indicate that there is more to God's purposes than equality. Cranfield explains that 'within the framework of this basic equality there is a certain undeniable priority of the Jew.' The meaning and implications of this priority are unwrapped by Paul in Romans 9-11 and have much to do with the ordering and organisation of salvation history, as God steers it. The word 'first' is not simply to be understood chronologically, but also theologically."

David M. Torrance & George Taylor, Israel God's Servant: God's Key to the Redemption of the World, Paternoster, 2007, page 157

"God says 'First to the Jew,' and He will never alter it. And if we wish to have His blessing, we must have it in obedience to Him, and we must alter our ways to His ways, and we must not wish Him to alter His ways to ours. The world will never be evangelized without the Jew. You may have your missionary conferences and your missionary meetings all over the world, but if the Bible be the Word of God you will never get the world evangelized without the Jew. In the interest of the Gentile world then, go first to the Jew. Put him in a prominent place in your prayers, and in your efforts and in your practical sympathies, and you will get blessing, for you will be on the lines of the Divine plan."

Joseph Cohn, Beginning at Jerusalem, pages 124-125 (Quoting John Wilkinson from the publication "Trusting and Toiling")

Romans 11:11-15

"It belongs to God's strategy for world mission that the Gospel should be taken to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. This is not because Jews are more important or more loved by God than Gentiles. It is not because in itself mission to the Jews is more important than mission to the Gentiles. It is because, when the Jews come to faith in Christ, as Paul anticipated that they will do, in large numbers, mission to the whole of humankind will develop and prosper in a new and marvellous way."

David M. Torrance & George Taylor, Israel God's Servant: God's Key to the Redemption of the World, Paternoster, 2007, page 8

"Now it is only reasonable to expect that just as national Israel, when restored to God, will bring blessings to the entire Gentile world, so when individual Jews are brought into the Church, blessings will redound to those who bring them in. That is, we have a right to expect that individual Jewish conversions now must bring individual blessings to the Gentiles in the Church. With convincing recurrence, this is exactly what has happened throughout the history of the Church, and is still happening. This is also what Scripture teaches; for Paul tells us, in speaking of the possibilities of Jewish conversion, in Romans 11:15, 'What shall their receiving (conversion) be, but life from the dead?'...Abundant proof of the argument here presented is to be found in even a superficial glance over the pages of Church history."

Joseph Hoffman Cohn, Beginning at Jerusalem, page 251

"Paul, some twenty years after the gospel had been on Gentile soil, writes this letter to the Roman Christians. It is apparent from both 1:16 and chapters 8-11 that the priority of Jewish evangelism was still in effect for Gentile Christians living in a Gentile world! Even though Paul teaches the essential equality of the Jew and Gentile in the Body of Christ, he still maintains both the separate priority and preeminence of Jewish evangelism, as well as Jewish eschatological blessing and accountability. The implication seems obvious; even for a Gentile living in the Gentile world, there are still theological and biblical reasons for the priority of Jewish evangelism."

Robert M. Hicks, *Mishkan, Issue No. 10*, Romans 1:16 and the Priority of Jewish Evangelism, (Wheaton, IL, Caspari Center, 1989), page 10.