

Entrust Eschatology The Divine Restoration of Israel Part 4 2/29/24

III. The Fulfillment of the Biblical Covenants

- We are looking at the study of eschatology from Scripture. And in this particular section, we are asking, “What does the future hold for Israel? ethnic Israelites?”
- The issue: the debate between dispensationalism vs. covenant theology
- Many amill/covenant theologians hold that:
 - The millennial kingdom mentioned in Revelation 20 is happening today. Thus, there is no future for a literal national Israel (of geographical, political, national prominence in the world) and that the Millennial Kingdom is not future.
 - The NT church is the new Israel, who is fulfilling the promises given to Israel of a future prominence among the land (e.g. the geographical; political, national global prominence of upgraded land; permanence in the land; peace, etc). The church is fulfilling these spiritually in place of Israel.
- One way to evaluate that claim is to look at the covenants given in the OT and determine if those covenants been fulfilled completely such that the church is the new Israel or has replaced Israel.
- Recall, as we think about how to understand prophecy and its fulfillment, remember much of this boils down to hermeneutics:
 - The hermeneutical approach that we do well to take is this:
 - later revelation builds upon the contextual, literal, grammatical understanding of earlier revelation
 - later revelation does not impose an understanding of the text that original readers could not have understood / authorial intent
- We saw that the covenants were not fulfilled in the book of Joshua, nor Ezra and Nehemiah.

- Now, we will turn to a consideration of the NT. Does the NT teach that the promises made to Israel were fulfilled such that the church has replaced Israel, or is Israel?

E. Fulfillment in the Eschatological Restoration of Israel

When Christ came in the first century, the believing remnant of Israel eagerly awaited the arrival of the Messiah and his Messianic Kingdom (Luke 2:25; 2:38; 23:50-52). John the Baptist and Jesus preached repentance in the light of the nearness of the kingdom (Matt 3:1-2; 4:17).

However, the nation of Israel rejected the Messiah (John 1:11; Matt 21:33-44; 27:33-35; Acts 3:13-15; Rom 9:30-33) and therefore the kingdom of God was taken away from her (Matt 21:43). During this period of “the hardening of Israel” (Rom 11:25) – also known as “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24) – the nation as a whole will continue to reject her Messiah and live in spiritual darkness (the current church age).

This divine hardening of Israel will not be permanent, however, for the kingdom will be restored Israel (Acts 1:6-7) at the end of the present age when Israel is saved in fulfillment of the covenant promises of the Old Testament (Rom 11:26-27).

THE FUTURE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

The following seven NT passages demonstrate that Israel has not been replaced by the church and that the nation should expect a future restoration as promised in the OT:

1. Matthew 19:28

“And Jesus said to [His twelve disciples], ‘Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’”

- The Recipients of the Promise (v. 28a)
 - There is no reason to take Israel (“12 tribes”) other than what Israel has always meant in the Bible; ethnic descendants from Abraham.

- In the NT there is not a single time where Israel means “church”; nor a single time where Israel refers to anything other than ethnic Jews.
- The Timing of Its Fulfillment (v. 28b)
 - in the regeneration
 - when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne
- The Thrones of their Judgment (v. 28c)
- The Objects of their Judgment (v. 28d)
- The Implication of this Prophecy (v. 28)

Arnold Fruchtenbaum: “Taken at face value, [Matthew 19:28] clearly states that Israel is destined to be restored in its twelve tribal divisions, and each tribe will be under the authority of a specific apostle. That...implies a national restoration in the New Testament.”

Louis Barbieri: “Though the nation was then rejecting His offer of the kingdom, the kingdom would come, with its extensive remaking of things spiritual (Isa. 2:3; 4:2-4; 11:9b), political (Isa. 2:4; 11:1-5, 10-11; 32:16-18), and geographical and physical (Isa. 2:2; 4:5-6; 11:6-9; 35:1-2). Christ will then sit **on His glorious throne** (cf. Matt. 25:31; Rev. 22:1).” (BKC, 2:65).

2. Luke 22:28-30

“And you [the twelve disciples] are those who have stood by Me in My trials; ²⁹and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you ³⁰that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

- The Loyalty of the Disciples (v. 28)
- The Granting of the Kingdom (v. 29a)
- The Sharing of the Kingdom (vv. 29b-30a)
- Sitting and Judging in the Kingdom (v. 30b)

IMPLICATION:

Robert Saucy: “The idea that Jesus is referring to some new spiritual Israel in this promise [in Matt 19:28/Luke 22:30] must be rejected. Matthew always makes a clear distinction between Gentiles and Jews, [and] Luke always uses the word ‘Israel’ to refer to the Jewish people.”

3. Luke 13:34-35

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it! ³⁵ Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord’” (cf. Matt 23:37-39).

- The **Present** Desolation of Israel (v. 34-35a)
 - The Rejection of Her Prophets (v. 34a)
 - The Rejection of Her Messiah (v. 34b)
 - The Desolation of Her House (v. 35a)
- The **Future** Restoration of Israel (v. 35b-c)
 - The Return of Christ (v. 35b)
 - The Repentance of Israel (v. 35c)

John Martin: “Jesus noted (quoting Ps. 118:26) that the people of the city would not see Him again till they said that He was the Messiah. The crowd did quote this verse when Jesus entered the city in His Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:38), but their religious leaders disapproved. Ultimately this truth will be proclaimed when Jesus comes again and enters the city as the millennial Ruler” (BKC, 2:242).

4. Luke 21:24

“They will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

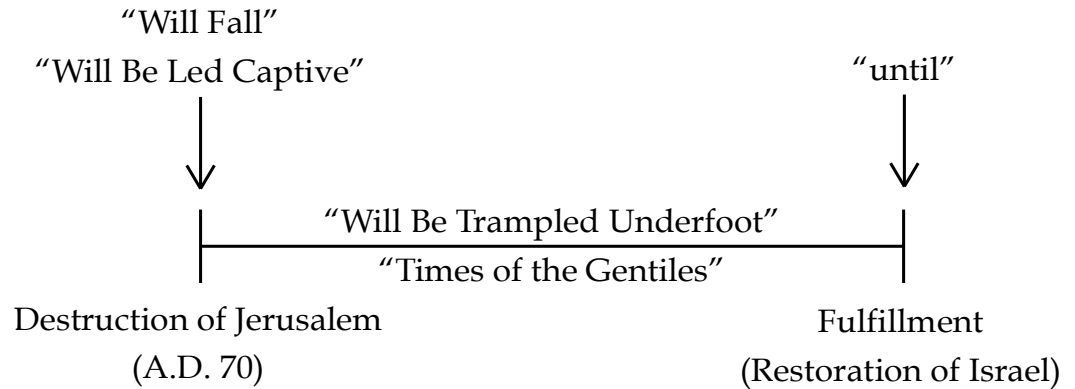
- The Certain Destruction of Jerusalem (v. 24a)
“will fall by the edge of the sword”
- The Gentile Domination of Israel (v. 24b)
“will be led captive into all the nations”
- The Ongoing Judgment of Israel (v. 24c)
“will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles”
- The Ultimate Restoration of Israel (v. 24d)
“until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”

KEY EXEGETICAL OBSERVATIONS:

- The future indicative verbs “will fall” (πесоῦνται) and “will be led captive” (αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται) portray undefined action in the future and describe the destruction of Jerusalem and subsequent dispersion of the Israelites in A.D. 70.
- The future periphrastic “will be trampled underfoot” (ἔσται πατουμένη) describes an ongoing continuous action or state in the future, which corresponds to “the times of the Gentiles.”
- When “until” (ἄχρι) is used as a temporal conjunction, it indicates a reversal of the previously described circumstances.

THEREFORE:

- When the times of the Gentiles are “fulfilled,” Israel’s future state of being trampled underfoot by the Gentiles will be reversed and the nation will be restored:



- This restoration will coincide with the return of Christ (v. 27) and is described as the “redemption” of Israel (v. 28) and the arrival of “the kingdom of God” (v. 31; cf. Lk 2:25; 2:38; 19:11; 22:16, 18, 30; 23:51; Acts 1:6-7; Rom 11:25-26).

5. Acts 1:6-7

“And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, ‘Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?’ ⁷ He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.’”

➤ The disciples’ question in Acts 1:6 contains three assumptions:

- 1) The Reality of the Kingdom (“restoring the **kingdom** to Israel”)
- 2) The Restoration of the Kingdom (“**restoring** the kingdom to Israel”)
- 3) The Recipients of the Kingdom (“restoring the kingdom to **Israel**”)

➤ However, just prior to the disciples’ question, Luke writes this:

Acts 1:3 “To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of 40 days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.”

- For 40 days, Jesus instructs them as to the future. And their immediate question, after those 40 days assumes a literal future for Israel.

➤ The disciples pose one question: the timing of the restoration

("Lord, is it at this **time**...?... It is not for you to know **times** or **epochs** which the Father has fixed..." v. 7)

- If the disciples were so misinformed about the nature and recipients of the promised kingdom, one would expect Jesus to have set the record straight and provide the needed correction at this crucial moment in redemptive history.
- But Jesus provides no correction. Instead, He simply says: "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority" (Acts 1:7).
- IMPLICATION: The apostles were expecting the Messianic Kingdom prophesied in the OT to be restored to the ethnic nation of Israel some time in the near future. Jesus affirms that there will be a future kingdom, although he does not inform them of the calendar date.

6. Acts 3:19-21

"Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, ²⁰ in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time."

- The Exhortation to Israel's Repentance (v. 19a)
- The Results of Israel's Repentance (vv. 19b-21)
 - The Forgiveness of Sin (v. 19b)
 - The Times of Refreshing (v. 20a)
 - The Coming of Messiah (v. 20b)
 - The Restoration of All Things (v. 21)

SUMMARY: Repentance → Return → Restoration

"Peter calls for corporate Jewish repentance so that the people would be forgiven and the Messiah would return and restore the kingdom to Israel"

(Peter Goeman, "Implications of the Kingdom in Acts 3:19-21," MSJ 26/1 [Spring 2015]: 80).

FOR FURTHER STUDY: " Peter Goeman, "Implications of the Kingdom in Acts 3:19-21," MSJ 26, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 75-93.

7. Romans 11:25-32

"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.' ²⁸ 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; ²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. ³² For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all."

Intro to Rom 11:

- Recall God's covenant with Abram:

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

- Fast-forward about 500 years; ethnic descendants multiplied into Egypt, then rescued from Egypt in the Exodus.
- After the Exodus:

Leviticus 26:44-45 'Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. ⁴⁵ 'But I will remember for them the covenant with

their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.’ ”

- Roughly 800 years, after failing to keep the Mosaic Covenant:

Jeremiah 31:35–37 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: ³⁶ “If this fixed order departs From before Me,” declares the LORD, “Then the offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever.” ³⁷ 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.

- And then the Messiah comes; the glorious Israelite; the Savior and Lamb of God. But, Israel rejects him.
- Jesus responds: Matthew 21:43 “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.”
 - Fast-forward again: the church is growing; 20 years after the ascension of Christ; and the Jews are still in rebellion.
 - Few of them are being saved. The thought arose: maybe God is done w/ the Jews?
 - Romans 9-11 answers that question. Paul recognizes that few Jews are being saved:

Romans 9:2–4 “I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed, *separated* from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises”

- Then Paul addresses a misunderstanding – Rom 9:13 – I am speaking to you who are Gentiles –
- Then, the statement in Romans 11:1

“I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.”

- Paul addresses this issue b/c, of course, it was an issue:
- Therefore, this is the issue: Are Paul's kinsmen "according to the flesh" (9:2-3) done with and being replaced by the church? [["Ok, Israel is set aside in redemption for a bit. Is this permanent? Or, will God keep his unconditional promises ?
 - We can now observe Romans 11:25-32 in a few parts:
 - 1) The Unveiled Mystery of Israel's Future Salvation (vv. 25-27)
 - The Hardening of Israel (v. 25a) – "a partial hardening has happened to Israel"
 - The Blessing of the Gentiles (v. 25b) – "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in"
 - The Salvation of Israel (vv. 26-27) – "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.'"
 - The Coming of the Redeemer (v. 26b)
 - The Fulfillment of the Covenant (v. 27)
 - 2) The Dual Status of Israel's Present Rejection (vv. 28-29)
 - **Enemies** According to the Gospel (v. 28a) – "From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake"
 - **Beloved** According to their Election (v. 28b) – "from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers"
 - The Irrevocable Gifts (v. 29a)
 - The Irrevocable Calling (v. 29b)
 - 3) The Divine Mercy of Israel's Imminent Restoration (vv. 30-32)
 - God's Mercy to the Gentiles (v. 30) – "just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience"

- God's Mercy to the Jews (v. 31) – “so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy”
- God's Mercy to All (v. 32) – “For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.”

CONCLUSION:

- In light of these NT passages and the unfulfilled nature of the biblical covenants, the Scriptures indicate that Israel awaits a literal future of restoration. The idea that the church has replaced Israel cannot be substantiated from Scripture. Upon Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation, Israel will experience her restoration during the Millennial Kingdom.