

06: Provoking Israel to Jealousy Through Prayer

In this session we're going to look at the role of Gentiles in provoking Israel to jealousy, specifically in terms of prayer. This mandate of the Gentile provocation of the Jewish people to salvation is strengthened or undermined by our theological perspective on Israel (which is why we will begin with fundamental and foundational propositions about the future of the covenant people from Paul's passionate warnings and declarations to Gentile believers in Rome).

I. A PROPHETIC AND APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVE OF ISRAEL'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE - ROMANS 11:11-15

1 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. 12 Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! 13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry 14 in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. 15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? (Romans 11:11-15)

A. Paul's perspective concerning the Jewish people:

1. The Jewish people as a nation **were elected in the past** (Romans 9:1-8), **are partially hardened in the present** (Romans 11:1-6, 25), and **will be saved in the future** (Romans 11:12, 15, 26).
2. The salvation of Israel in the future was foundational to Paul's eschatology; as it should be to ours. Paul anticipated what he called "the full inclusion" of the Jewish people. He also called this "life from the dead" (resurrection). This is what he meant when he said "all Israel will be saved." The national conversion of the Jewish people was firmly established in the Old Testament. Paul labored to emphasize the enduring nature of those prophecies.
3. He wrote to the Church in Rome that was predominantly comprised of Gentiles to warn them concerning their attitude towards and relationship with the Jewish people. The Gentiles in Rome (much like the Gentiles in the nations today) were "ignorant" and "arrogant" in their disposition towards the Jew.
4. Paul vigorously encouraged the Gentiles in Rome to set their hearts and mind to relate to the Jewish people through **affectionate identification** (11:28), **ferveat intercession** (10:1-2), **radical sacrifice** (9:1-3), and **focused missionary efforts to provoke them to jealousy** (11:11-15).

5. Many people avoid the issue of Israel in the name of “just loving Jesus.” Jesus is deeply offended by this attitude.
- B. The ethical and ministerial implications of our theology of Israel:
1. How we view the Jewish people determines how we relate to them, pray for them, and witness to them. We may disagree with each other about many eschatological issues but this issue of Israel is one that bears unique and significant ethical and ministerial implications.
 2. Many in the Church have a distorted paradigm of God’s dealings with Israel. They promote/believe in the theological **redefinition** and **replacement** of Israel in God’s purposes. As a result, identification, intercession, and ministry to the Jewish people is undermined; even by many of our heroes. This is why there are so few Messianic Jews.
 3. Church history is rife with examples of false doctrines about Israel justifying horrendous and grievous sins against the Jewish people. These false doctrines are thriving today in some of the most influential pulpits and seminaries in the nations. For example:

“[Paul] has systematically transferred the privileges and attributes of “Israel” to the Messiah and His people. It is therefore greatly preferable to take...“Israel” as a typically Pauline polemical redefinition...” (N.T. Wright) ¹

“The church, then, as the people of the New Covenant has taken the place of Israel, and the national Israel is nothing other than the empty shell from which the pearl has been removed and which has lost its function in the history of redemption.” (Herman Ridderbos) ²

“...hard fact that national Israel and its law have been permanently replaced by the church and the New Covenant....” (Bruce Waltke) ³

“God willed that after the institution of the New Covenant there should no longer be any Jewish people in the world - yet here they are! That is a fact - a very sad fact, brought about by their wicked rebellion against God.” (Albert Pieters)⁴
 4. Replacement theology and Dispensational theology are the two ditches on the side of the proverbial road of apostolic teaching on Israel. Both determine and damage our ministry and relationship to the Jew.

¹ Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 25

² H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, (Eerdmans 1975 344-345)

³ from *Kingdom Promises as Spiritual*, in *Continuity and Discontinuity*, pg. 274

⁴ from *The Seed of Abraham*; pg. 123

5. The Church has consistently and constantly failed at the Romans 11:11-12 mandate to “provoke Israel to jealousy.” What we believe about Israel matters.

II. PRAYING FOR ISRAEL WITH A PROPHETIC AND APOSTOLIC PERSPECTIVE

- A. Provoking Israel to jealousy by prophetic perception, affectionate identification and fervent intercession (Isaiah 62:1-7)

1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. 2 The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. 3 You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. 4 You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. 5 For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. 6 On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, 7 and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. (Isaiah 62:1-7)

1. God’s relentless passion for Israel (v. 1-2)
 2. God’s commitment to restore, exalt, & dignify the Jewish people (v. 3-4)
 3. God’s promise of affectionate relationship with the restored nation (v. 5)
 4. God’s establishment of intercessors for the salvation of Israel (v. 6-7)
- B. How to pray for Israel:
 1. Praying for the salvation of the rebellious - Romans 9:1-5, 10:1-2
 2. Praying for the anointing of the Messianic remnant - Acts 4:27-31
 3. Praying for the peace of Jerusalem - Psalm 122:6-7
 - C. If we merely talk about Israel, debate about Israel, write books about Israel, and do not pray for Israel we are living far beneath the intentions of God.
 - D. The theological, political, ideological and territorial struggle over the question of the Jew “is not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities” (Ephesians 6:12). Our primary mode of engagement must be prayer.