

Soon: The Gospel and the Last Days

Part 3: Full Circle: Back to Israel

(preached 7/11/21)

Please turn to *Romans 11*.

Sermon #1: The King is Coming

- Jesus has conquered Satan, death, and sin and is seated as KOK and LOL at the capital: Heaven. He will be riding forth soon at the head of His army to take over every nation on the planet.
- He's sent His messengers ahead of Him to offer clemency to everyone: the forgiveness of sins, adoption into the royal family, and citizens of His coming Kingdom.
- When He comes He will crush all resistance, judge the nations, then establish His eternal Kingdom here on earth as it is in Heaven.
- We are His messengers so let's tell everyone that the King has been victorious and that He's on His way!

Sermon #2: The Gospel Must Reach all nations.

- After Noah's Flood, God divided the world into 70 nations and gave rule over them to Angelic princes.
- Said princes couldn't handle being worshipped and they were corrupted, rebelling against the Lord and calling themselves gods.
- The people of these nations came to be known as "Gentiles" which also translates into "the nations, heathen." In the days of Jesus, many Jews also derogatorily called Gentiles "dogs" and "sinners."
- Yahweh kept the nation of Israel for Himself, and called Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and then Moses & the people to be in covenant with Him.
- He told them to only worship Him, obey His commandments, and separate themselves from the other nations.
- He forbade all their "religious" practices including astrology, witchcraft, divination, psychics, channeling, and mediums.
- All those "new age" practices are not from God, but were taught to humanity by the fallen angelic princes.
- Gentile religions tend to be polytheistic and have an entire pantheon of "gods" they worship.
- When Jews get Saved, they're still worshipping the same God but are given a fuller understanding in the form of Jesus and the NT revelations. They have to transition from the Old Covenant to the new one.
- Gentiles were never under the OC...if anything we were in covenant with fallen angels. When we're Saved, we cast off these false gods and all their ways, clinging to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

- Gentiles are adopted in the family of God and the good news is that adopted kids have all the same rights, inheritance, and authority as the blood sons.
- When Jesus came, the Jews believed that only Israel would be saved and then Messiah would ride out with His Kingdom conquering army.
- In their eyes, the only option the Gentiles had was submission and would never get a seat at the table.
- Even the Apostles had to adjust their thinking and thank God they did: they all left Israel and rode forth as messengers into the nations to tell us all that Jesus was coming!

TODAY we're going to continue to explore the timeline of WHEN Jesus will finally ride out at the head of His Revelation 19 army. Quick reminder: I'm not referring to the Rapture but the Second Coming.

SITTING ON THRONE. As of right now, Jesus is SITTING on His throne and He's been holding court for the last 2000 years. At some point, He will rise up from His throne and mount up on the white horse which appears in Rev 19:11 and that moment will take place when the Gospel goes full circle.

Just as it originated in Israel and went out from there, it must return there before Jesus comes back.

"But Scott...the Gospel started in Israel...are you saying it's not there now?"

FLICKERING AT BEST. It's not...or I should say the flame of the good news is only flickering in the place where it started. Let's search the Scriptures to find out why this is important to our understand of when Jesus is going to come back.

Palm Sunday, 32 AD. Jesus and the disciples are about to enter Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. A massive crowd is already gathered, waving palms and clothes and cheering exuberantly. Why?

- Was this the first time Jesus came to Jerusalem? No, He'd been there many times.
- Was this the first time Jesus came to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover? Nope, He'd done it every year of His life as the Law required.

THE JEWISH PEOPLE BELIEVED HE WAS COMING TO GATHER HIS LAST DAYS ARMY AND RIDE FORTH INTO THE NATIONS TO CONQUER.

SAYS SOMETHING WEIRD. Knowing all this and a lot more, Jesus stops outside the gates of the city and says something weird:

Luke 13:34-35 (ESV)

³⁴ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!

How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

³⁵ Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

Verse 34: Jesus wants to gather His army! He wants the full manifestation of the Kingdom to come! Yet the people are not ready and He will go the cross, as His Father commanded, and not the throne.

Verse 35: Funny thing is the people shouted "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" when He rode through the gates, but clearly Jesus wasn't prophesying THAT. He was referring to a FUTURE event...one that has not happened yet. He's referring to a time, in the last days, when all of Israel will finally recognize Him as their Messiah, and the Son of God.

PICTURE WORLD. Picture the entire world in your mind right now...all 7 continents. Now do your best to think of the nations within said continents. None of them can name or see them all, just do your best. ***Of all the nations, name all the ones in covenant with God.***

ISRAEL. If you said Israel you would be correct, and they are still under the OC...sort of. With no temple, they're unable to perform the animal blood sacrifices to atone for sin. When the 3rd temple is finally rebuilt and the sacrifice continues, Israel will be able to fulfill this important aspect of the OC.

TEMPLE SACRIFICE. Side note: do you know that there is a priesthood of Levites in Israel right now and they are already performing animal sacrifices for sin, despite there being no temple? Truly, the end is nearer than we thought.... **DID YOU SEE VIDEO ON FACEBOOK?**

ANY OTHER NATIONS? Were you able to select any other nations in covenant with God? Once upon a time Europe was called "Christendom" and although the church still has a presence there, Europe has become mostly secular and abandoned Christ. In my opinion, the USA is the closest thing to a "Christian nation" that there is, but we are falling away fast.

JESUS IN POSITIVE LIGHT. Despite all this, however, most people in the world think of Jesus in a positive light. Even those who don't think He was the Messiah or God in the flesh usually think He was a decent guy. They might call Him a philosopher, a prophet, or a hippie, but people's general view of Him is generally positive. At this point, as far as the world is concerned, the church is hated more than Jesus.

Except in Israel.

HATES JESUS. Israel is the one nation that hates Jesus and His Name, and they don't refer to Him by His proper Hebrew name of Yeshua, but a derogatory version of it called Yesu. If you were to go to Israel today and begin sharing the good news, telling people about Jesus, you would be met with scorn and outright hostility. Israel is the only nation where Jesus is hated more than the church.

ISAIAH 53. Did you know that some of the orthodox translations of the Jewish Bible leave out Isaiah 53, because even they know that blessed chapter describes Jesus:

Isaiah 53:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

DESCENDANTS OF PHARISEES. To this day, here in the 21st century, the few Israeli Christians refer to the orthodox and ultra-orthodox rabbis in Israel as the gatekeepers of knowledge and claim they actively suppress any and all doctrine surrounding Jesus as Messiah. They call it "Israel's Best Kept Secret." They refer to these rabbis as the modern day descendants of the Pharisees.

GATEKEEPERS. Indeed, look what Jesus said about them 2000 years ago:

Matthew 23:13 (ESV)

¹³ "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

GOSPEL SUPPRESSED. The Gospel barely exists in modern day Israel and, if anything, its actively suppressed and persecuted. The name of Jesus is an anathema there, provoking similar reactions that it did 2000 years ago.

Why? There are several reasons:

1. The Apostles themselves ran into great resistance, among both the religious authorities and the people, and they eventually left and went into the Gentile nations.
2. When the Romans invaded in 70 A.D. they surrounded Jerusalem and gave everyone the choice to leave first before they commenced attack. There was great division among the Jews who remained under the OC and those who believed in Jesus. The OC Jews said they needed to stay to defend the Temple, but the NC Jews knew that they were the new temple of God...and they left. There's been a rift ever since.
3. In 132 A.D the Jews tried to mount another rebellion against Rome and there were still Jewish Christians among them. The rabbis at the time declared Simon Bar Kokhba to be the Messiah who would lead them to victory over Rome and demanded everyone agree with them. The Christian Jews refused to, saying that Jesus was the Messiah, and

therefore would not submit to Simon's authority. They abandoned the battle which only widened the rift between Christ and the Jewish people.

HADRIAN CREATES PALESTINE. The losses of that war, on both sides, were devastating. Roman Emperor Hadrian was so angry over it that he erased the nation of Israel off the map and renamed it Palestine. Even after the formation of the nation of Israel in 1948, do you know to this day most of the nations of the world refuse to acknowledge it on a map? With the exception of the US, most world maps don't include Israel and refer to the entire area as "Palestine"?

30 CHRISTIANS IN 1948. When Israel was formed in 1948 there were 30 Christians there. The nation where the Gospel was first introduced by God in the flesh, where the Church was created, where it grew by the thousands in just a few short years was reduced to 30 because of the modern day version of the Pharisees.

NOW 30,000. Do you how many are there now? 30,000. You might be thinking that's not so many, but in fact it's a 1000x increase. Let me give it to you another way: form a classic "stock market" type chart in your mind. Let the beginning be around 32 AD with the advent of Pentecost where 3000 people were Saved on day 1. Luke records in Acts 16:5 that evangelism and miracles were hot, and the numbers of the church grew daily...likely by the hundreds, perhaps thousands. So far we see the graph of Christians in Israel shooting up.

INVASION 70 AD. Then came the Roman invasion in 70 A.D. where they offered a way out, and many Jewish Christians took it and left.

INVASION 132 AD. Then came the last invasion in 132 A.D. where there was another split between the Jews and Jewish Christians that was more permanent. The Romans refused to allow any of them back into the country, driving them out to disperse among the nations.

TREND DOWNWARD. Therefore from 70 AD to 132 AD, we see a sharp trend downward in our chart...all the way to the bottom...where it remained for 2000 years.

LAST 70 YEARS TREND UPWARD. In 1948 AD the number was 30...still at the bottom. From then until now, about 70 years, the chart has been on the steady uptick and has increased 1000%. If that truly were a stock, suppose you had bought 100 shares at \$30 each for an investment of \$3000. Now that each share is worth \$30,000 your selling price would be \$3 million.

30,000 Christians in Israel may sound small to you, but remember that Israel is around the size of NJ and only has about 8 million people.

- There are more Christians in Israel now than there ever has been, even in the first century.
- This is the longest and most consistent upward trend of the Church growing there ever, even beating the 1st century.

ROMANS 9-10. In Romans 9-10, the Apostle Paul is grieving over Israel's rejection of Jesus and the Gospel. He already sees the numbers trending downward and he himself has decided to give up on them, going instead to the Gentile nations.

HARDENS HEARTS. Yet God reveals to Paul why this MUST happen—that He has actually closed the spiritual eyes and hearts of the Jews to Jesus just as He once hardened Pharaoh's heart centuries before. The great purpose of doing so is what I told you last week: God never intended for the Gentiles to merely submit, but to have a seat at the table.

NEVER WOULD HAVE LEFT EGYPT.... In the days of Moses, the Hebrew people had lived in Egypt for nearly 400 years and had never gone back to the land God promised them. While they were slaves, they were also comfortable there in the “the devil you know is better than the devil you don't” sense. They didn't leave because Moses showed up, *they were driven out by Pharaoh's anger which came about only after the Lord hardened his heart*. As a result of the Hebrews leaving Egypt, all the heathen nations in the middle east suddenly knew the name of the One True God and saw His power. Remember years later when Rahab confesses to Joshua and Caleb that all of Jericho knew about the Hebrew God and feared the coming of His people.

God knew the only way that the Gospel would leave Israel and spread to the whole world would be to harden Israel's heart so that the Apostles would leave and bring Christ to the Gentiles.

BACK TO ISRAEL. That brings us to Romans 11 where Paul tells us when the Gospel will finally make its way back to Israel so that Jesus will return:

Romans 11:1-10 (ESV)

¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?

³ “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.”

⁴ But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”

⁵ So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.

⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

⁷ What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,

⁸ as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.”

⁹ And David says, “Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them;

¹⁰ let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever.”

REMNANT. A few moments ago I revealed there were 30,000 Christians in Israel and I would understand if you thought to yourself that it wasn’t much, especially compared to the 8 million people who live there. Yet look what Paul revealed in verses 1-4: God has kept aside for Himself a remnant just as He did in the days of Elijah.

Verses 5-6: this remnant of 30,000 have been placed there by Grace for a purpose God has for them, which Paul reveals momentarily and which helps to answer our longing question of “when are you coming back, Lord Jesus?!”

Verse 7-10: even the modern day Pharisees who are actively suppressing the truth have a pre-ordained purpose assigned by God Himself...just as Pharaoh once did.

ASSIGNS RESTRAINER. Ironical that, in one fashion or another, God always assigns a restrainer and sometimes said restrainer holds back something good, something evil. Either way, it’s the Lord Who decides when the restrainer will stop holding back. Sometimes it’s all of a sudden, sometimes gradual. Sometimes what seems like all of sudden has been building for awhile.

DAM BREAKS. The Gospel must return to Israel in full force, yet clearly the restraining element of the modern Rabbi’s is still active...but the fact things have gone from 30 to 30,000 is a sign to me that God has decided on a gradual approach. I picture a large dam holding back massive amounts of water. When the dam is new it’s strong but, as time goes on, cracks begin to appear. At first water only seeps through and said water causes the cracks to widen, allowing even greater flows. Next thing you know it’s pouring through in one place, then another, then another and eventually the dam will break and the waters will cause a flood!

HOW DOES DAM BREAK? Let’s read on in Romans 11 see how this will happen:

Romans 11:11-16 (ESV)

¹¹ 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?

¹⁶ If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Verse 11: Israel was meant to stumble, but not fall. Here is the purpose:

WHEN SALVATION COMES TO THE GENTILES EN MASSE, THE HEBREW PEOPLE BECOME JEALOUS.

JEWS DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE... Please understand this from their viewpoint, one that religious Jews maintain to this day:

- Since they don't acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah,
- They therefore don't acknowledge the existence of a "new" covenant available to the Gentiles.
- They don't refer to the covenant they're in as the "old" one...they see it as the ONLY one.
- Therefore they still don't see Gentiles as having any relationship with God (unless they convert to Judaism).

Therefore what they need to see is the Gentile Church most definitely having some sort of covenant with their God.

THEY DON'T SEE THAT YET. Do you believe, as of right now, that they do? I don't. ***While they acknowledge the existence of Christianity, they don't believe we're worshipping the same God.*** The first time I experienced this I was stunned—a Jewish man who knew I was a Christian kept referring to "your God" and I was getting annoyed. I finally retorted: "why do you keep calling Him 'your God'? We worship the same One, the difference being we have Jesus." He disagreed vehemently and at the time, I didn't understand why.

NOT EXPERIENCING JEALOUSY YET. Therefore if I'm right, the Jews of Israel and everywhere else are not experiencing jealousy en masse of the Church and our relationship with God...they still think we worship an entirely different God! ***Thus something will need to happen within the Church where our Light shines so brightly, that all of Israel is—as Paul states—provoked to jealousy.***

ARMY EXAMPLE. To link this up with the army analogy:

- Israel won't be provoked until the Gospel reaches all the nations and the Church is shining brightly.
- Jesus won't return until Israel is jealous and remember what He said before He entered Jerusalem for the last time: when He returns they will be clapping, cheering, and crying

out “blessed in He Who comes in the name of the Lord!” vs the way they feel about Him now.

Recall what I told you earlier: **right now they consider Him and His name to be a curse and not a blessing.**

JUMP TO VERSE 25. Jumping to verse 25 for the sake of time and length:

Romans 11:25-36 (ESV)

²⁵ Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;

²⁷ “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.

²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,

³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.

³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

³⁴ “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?”

³⁵ “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Verses 25-29: Paul repeats that the Lord has partially hardened Israel’s heart toward the Gospel so that it would go into the all the world.

Verses 30-32 contain a profound revelation!

- The stubbornness of Israel—brought on them by God—caused the Apostles to go the Gentiles and that’s the only reason you and I know Jesus. It’s the reason you and I are sitting in Church today with the Holy Spirit living inside of us. It’s the only reason we were brought out of sin and into righteousness and the only reason we can call God our Father.
- Israel’s disobedience brought about our righteousness and gave us the mercy of God.
- Now that we have His mercy, we are to freely offer the same to the Jews.

MIRACLES OR...? For years I've heard Christians speculate on what needs to be flowing through the Church to provoke Israel to jealousy. Some say its healing and miracles, but both Jesus and the Apostles abounded with those and Israel was not Saved.

MERCY/COMPASSION. I believe Paul told us here: it's mercy, also translated compassion. It's ironic that the devil is constantly trying to make victims out of people, separating us by race and trying to stir up anger convincing people that certain races have been marginalized and under privileged.

JEWS MOST PERSECUTED. Do you know that the most persecuted and hated race since the beginning has been the Jews? No matter what country they're in, what sort of people they're surrounded by, or what the morals of the times are, the Jews are the most despised of all people.

END TIMES WORSE FOR JEWS. That hasn't changed and it won't. End times Scriptures tell of a time of even greater persecution of the Jews when the Antichrist finally appears.

Therefore the time of mercy, on the part of the Church toward the Jews, is more needed than ever.

ALL ISRAEL SAVED. In Romans 11:26, which we just read, Paul says the day is coming when ALL of Israel will be Saved. The day is coming when they will see Jesus as their Messiah and Lord...and then the end shall come.

SOCIAL MEDIA THE MOST? I end with a question: *which country of the world do you believe is the most addicted to the internet and social media?* The answer is Israel. Israeli Jews spend an average of 3x the amount of time on the internet and SM than Americans do.

60 MILLION VIEWS. Did you know that the remnant of Jewish Christians in Israel have shrewdly used this to God's advantage? They've produced Gospel videos that have 60 million views in the nation of Israel alone. Even the modern day Pharisees haven't been able to stop that, and the Gospel IS spreading there more quickly than it ever has.

The end is nearer than we thought.