THE FUTURE FORETOLD

Biblical Prophecy Without the Panic

STUDY COMPANION

WHY DOES ISRAEL MATTER?

READ • REFLECT • STUDY • APPLY

Welcome

Why does Israel matter so much when Christians talk about Bible prophecy?

Is it because of today's headlines? Because Israel appears throughout Scripture? Or because God made promises that still matter?

In this week's message, we discovered three reasons:

- God made promises to Israel.
- Israel's story leads us to Jesus.
- The New Testament gives us reason to believe God's purposes concerning Israel are not finished.

This companion will help you explore those truths for yourself.

Part One — Follow the Message is a complete, beginner-friendly study. You can stop when you finish it.

Part Two — Go Deeper is optional. We'll examine the relationship between Israel and the church, including why Christians interpret these passages differently.

You don't have to know everything about prophecy to begin.

TEXT FIRST. THEORY SECOND.

PART ONE — FOLLOW THE MESSAGE

1. God Made Promises to Israel

Read Genesis 12:1–3.

Before Israel was a nation, God spoke to a man named Abram, later called Abraham.

God promised to make him into a great nation, bless him, and make him a blessing to others.

Then God said that all peoples on earth would be blessed through him.

That's important.

God wasn't choosing Abraham's family because He didn't care about everyone else. He was beginning a story through one family that would eventually reach the world.

Abraham's son Isaac had a son named Jacob. God later gave Jacob the name *Israel*. His descendants became the people of Israel.

Before Israel was a nation, it was a family connected to a promise.

Reflect

1. What promises do you find in Genesis 12:1–3?
2. Who would ultimately benefit from God's blessing through Abraham?

What this teaches us: Israel matters because God made promises to Israel—and those promises were connected to His plan to bless the world.

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2. Israel's Story Leads to Jesus

Read Romans 9:4–5.

Sometimes we think of the Old Testament and New Testament as separate stories.

But Paul reminds us that Israel received the covenants, the law, the worship, and the promises.

And then he tells us that the Messiah came through Israel.

The Messiah is Jesus.

Jesus was Jewish. His disciples were Jewish. The earliest Christians were Jewish.

Christianity didn't appear out of nowhere. It grew out of the story God had been telling through Israel for generations.

Remember God's promise that all nations would be blessed through Abraham?

Through Jesus, that blessing reaches people from every nation.

Reflect

3. According to Romans 9:4–5, what special privileges and promises were associated with Israel?
4. How does knowing that Jesus came through Israel change the way you understand the Old Testament?

What this teaches us: Israel matters because Israel's story leads us to Jesus. And Jesus is the center of our faith.

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3. God Has Not Rejected Israel

Read Romans 11:1, 25, 29.

After Jesus rose from the dead, the church grew to include both Jewish believers and Gentile believers. A *Gentile* is simply someone who isn't Jewish.

That raised a question.

If God was now gathering people from many nations into the church, had He finished His purposes for Israel?

Paul asks directly:

“Did God reject his people?”

His answer is:

“By no means!” (Romans 11:1, NIV)

Later, Paul describes Israel as experiencing a hardening **“in part until”** the full number of Gentiles has come in.

And in verse 29, he says God's gifts and calling are **“irrevocable”**—meaning they are not withdrawn or taken back.

Christians disagree about exactly how God's purposes concerning Israel will unfold. But these passages give us good reason to take His promises seriously.

Reflect

5. What do the words *"in part"* and *"until"* suggest about Israel's present condition?
6. What does Romans 11:29 reveal about God's character?

What this teaches us: Israel matters because the New Testament gives us reason to believe God's purposes concerning Israel are not finished.

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4. Your Pivot Point — Can God Be Trusted?

We've spent this study talking about God's promises to Israel.

But there's a personal question underneath it all.

Does God keep His promises?

Sometimes we pray for something, wait for an answer, and begin wondering whether God has forgotten us.

I've learned that there's an important difference between what God has promised and what I hope He will do.

Sometimes I build expectations around something God never actually promised.

And when those expectations aren't met, I can mistake disappointment for God's unfaithfulness.

That's why knowing Scripture matters.

God's faithfulness isn't measured by whether He meets every expectation I have.

It's measured by whether He keeps His Word.

Apply

7. Is there something you're waiting for God to do? Has He specifically promised that outcome, or is it something you're hoping for?
8. What promise from Scripture can you hold on to while you wait?

Prayer

Father, thank You for being faithful even when I don't understand Your timing. Help me distinguish between what You have promised and what I have hoped for. Teach me to trust Your Word, Your character, and Your wisdom. Keep my eyes on Jesus. Amen.

You've Completed Part One!

You can now answer our question:

Why does Israel matter?

Because God made promises to Israel, Israel's story leads to Jesus, and Romans 11 gives us reason to believe God's purposes concerning Israel are not finished.

That's the foundation.

You don't have to settle every prophecy question today.

If you're ready to stop here, you've completed this week's study.

If you'd like to explore the more difficult questions about Israel and the church, continue to Part Two.

PART TWO — GO DEEPER

5. Did the Church Replace Israel?

In the message, we introduced an important question.

If the church now includes both Jewish and Gentile believers, what happened to God's promises to Israel?

Christians have reached different conclusions.

One interpretation: God's promises find their fulfillment in Christ and His people

Many Christians emphasize that everyone who belongs to Jesus shares in God's covenant blessings.

Read Galatians 3:26–29.

Paul teaches that those who belong to Christ are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to the promise.

Christians who emphasize this passage often understand the church as the fulfillment or continuation of God's covenant people.

Some describe this as fulfillment rather than replacement because they believe God's promises reach their intended goal in Jesus.

Another interpretation: Israel and the church remain distinguishable

Other Christians emphasize that Paul continues to speak of Israel as a recognizable people with particular promises.

Read Romans 11:25–29.

They believe God has future purposes concerning Israel that should not automatically be transferred to the church.

This is the interpretation we're following in *The Future Foretold*.

But we want to understand why we believe it.

Investigate

1. What does Galatians 3:26–29 teach about the blessings shared by those who belong to Christ?
2. What does Romans 11:25–29 suggest about God's continuing purposes concerning Israel?
3. Can both passages be true without meaning Israel and the church have identical prophetic roles? Explain your reasoning.

Remember: Jewish and Gentile believers are saved through the same Savior, Jesus Christ. The disagreement concerns how God's promises will ultimately be fulfilled.

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6. Different Promises, Different Prophetic Roles?

If Israel and the church remain distinguishable, what does that mean?

It doesn't mean God has two different plans of salvation.

It means He may have particular purposes for Israel and particular promises concerning the church within His one redemptive plan.

Let's examine a few examples.

Promises concerning Israel

Read Genesis 17:7–8 and Jeremiah 31:31–37.

Notice the promises concerning Abraham's descendants, the land, and God's continuing relationship with Israel.

Promises concerning believers in Christ

Read John 14:1–3 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

Notice what Jesus and Paul teach about the future hope of believers.

Investigate

4. What specific promises do you find in the passages concerning Israel?
5. What future hope is described for believers in Christ?
6. Does sharing in salvation through Jesus necessarily mean every promise has the same fulfillment? Why or why not?

An important caution

These passages don't answer every question by themselves.

Christians who see greater continuity between Israel and the church point to other passages, including Ephesians 2:11–22, which emphasizes the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers.

Those who distinguish Israel and the church emphasize passages such as Romans 11 and Jeremiah 31.

Both perspectives must account for the whole of Scripture.

That's why we don't build an entire interpretation from a single verse.

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7. Practice — Text First. Theory Second.

Consider this statement:

“God has completely rejected Israel and transferred every promise to the church.”

Before agreeing or disagreeing, return to Romans 11.

What does Paul explicitly say?

Now consider another statement:

“Every major event involving modern Israel fulfills biblical prophecy.”

Does Romans 11 establish that claim?

What additional passages and evidence would you need?

Your investigation

7. Which conclusion about Israel and the church currently seems best supported by the passages you've studied? Why?
8. What question would you like to investigate further before reaching a firm conclusion?

It's okay to say, *“I'm still studying.”*

In fact, that's a much better answer than pretending to know something Scripture hasn't made clear to you yet.

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8. Bringing It Back to Jesus

After Paul's discussion of Israel and the Gentiles in Romans 11, he doesn't end with a prophecy chart.

He ends with worship.

Read Romans 11:33–36.

Paul marvels at God's wisdom and knowledge.

That's a fitting place for us to finish.

We can study carefully, hold convictions, acknowledge differences, and still recognize that God's wisdom exceeds our understanding.

The goal of prophecy isn't simply to know what might happen next.

It's to know the God who holds the future.

And ultimately, our hope is found in Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for Your Word and for the promises You have made. Help me study with humility, test what I hear against Scripture, and remain willing to learn. Keep me from fear and speculation. Most of all, help me grow in my trust in Jesus. Amen.

NEXT TIME — THE BLESSED HOPE

We've explored why Israel matters to Bible prophecy.

But that raises another question:

What has God promised the church?

The New Testament speaks about something Christians are waiting for—something Paul calls *"the blessed hope."*

And that brings us to a word you've probably heard:

Rapture.

What does it mean? Where does the idea come from? And why should the promise of Christ's return bring comfort rather than fear?

To prepare: Read Titus 2:11–14 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

Keep the Conversation Going

Do you have a question about Israel, the church, the rapture, or another prophecy topic?

Send it to Pivot Point Church. Your questions help shape future messages in *The Future Foretold*.

TEXT FIRST. THEORY SECOND.

KNOW WHAT YOU BELIEVE. KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE IT.

Pivot Point Church — Biblical Prophecy Without the Panic