

Spotlight Israel

Will we as believers go through the 7-year period of tribulation that will fall upon the earth during the End Times (Revelation 4-19)?

A key truth that supports the pre-tribulational view, the view that the church will be raptured or removed before the tribulation period begins, is a promise that God gave the nation of Israel which requires fulfillment. Once the church is removed, God's spotlight will once again shine on Israel. Tribulation will drive the nation of Israel into the arms of their Messiah, Jesus.

An opposing view, espoused by replacement theologians, sees the church replacing Israel. Promises made to Israel are fulfilled in the church. No special status or future remains for the nation of Israel.

Four Characteristics of the Promise God Made to Israel:

1. It is an _____ (Everlasting) Promise.
 - a. *"All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever"*
Genesis 13:15
 - b. Replacement theologians teach that this promise was valid until the church came along in the time of Christ. But the Scriptures underscore that this promise made to Abraham in Genesis 13 is everlasting. Jeremiah 31:35, I Chronicles 16:16-17, and Psalm 105:9-10 directly teach the permanence of this promise.
2. It is an _____ (Unconditional) Promise.
 - a. *"When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces."* (Genesis 15:17) In ancient times, solemn contracts were signed by a blood covenant, with both parties walking between pieces of fresh meat. If only one party walked, he was bearing witness that he would keep the agreement regardless of the actions of the other party.
 - b. God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham, declaring, *"To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates."* Genesis 15:18
3. It is an _____ (Amazing) Promise.
 - a. *"When Abram was ninety-nine years old and childless, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty, walk before me and be blameless, I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."* Genesis 17:1
 - b. The nation of Israel is nothing short of one miracle after another, all the way to modern times. The rebirth of Israel in 1948 was a miracle, along with their ability to survive and thrive in the midst of bitter enemies.
4. It is a _____ (Land-Based) Promise.
 - a. *"Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."* Genesis 13:17

- b. Replacement theologians spiritualize this promise, seeing it fulfilled in heaven, but the Scriptures place great stress on the literal, physical land given by God to Israel (*Isaiah 11:1-2; 14:1-3; 27:12-13; 43:1-8; 49:8-13; 66:20; Jeremiah 16:14-16; 23:3-8; 30:1-11; 31:31-40; 32:37-44; Ezekiel 20:42; 34:11-16; 39:25-29; Hosea 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:4-7; Zechariah 8:3-8*).
- c. Scripture also foretells that the temple will be rebuilt in the End Times (II Thessalonians 2:4) and that there will be wide-scale conversions among Jews to Christ (Romans 11:25).

What is going to drive the Jews into the arms of their Messiah? According to Daniel 9, note the following:

- **490 years are set aside for God to deal with Israel (verse 24).**
- **483 years have already occurred, culminating with the public reception that Jesus received on Palm Sunday (verse 25)**
- **7 YEARS REMAIN! “He (the Antichrist) will confirm a covenant with many for one seven. In the middle of the seven, he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple, he will set up an abomination that caused desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (verse 27)**
- **The Antichrist will break his treaty with Israel after 3 ½ years by committing a shocking sacrilege in the temple.**
- **In these last 3 ½ years, the Jewish people are going to be driven toward their Messiah. God will deal with them “to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness,…” (verse 24)**

How does this affect us? If the rapture is near, you want to be ready to meet the Lord when He returns. Going through the tribulation period will be no picnic! Even if the rapture is not near, we are reminded by this teaching that our God is a God who keeps His promises! He will keep His promises to Israel, and He will keep His promises to you!