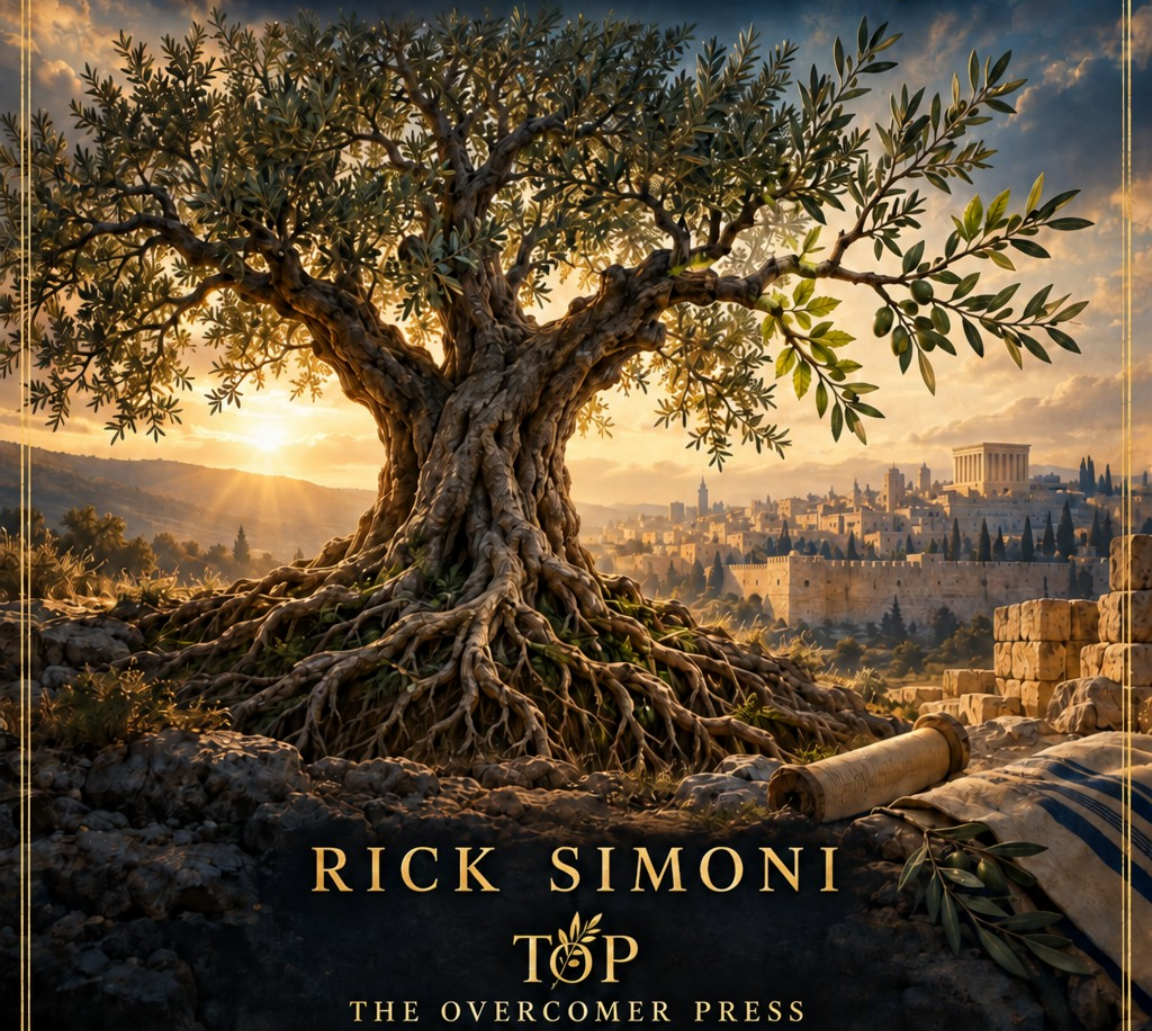
THE ISRAEL GOD IS NOT DONE WITH

One Seed. One Covenant. One People.



RICK SIMONI

THE OVERCOMER PRESS
A TOP Publication

The Fulfillment in Christ Series

THE ISRAEL

God Is Not Done With

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This book examines the biblical promises concerning Israel and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Its critique concerns theological interpretations and does not presume a judgment upon the salvation, motives, or character of every person holding them. It is not a political program for or against any modern state.

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About This Book

“God is not done with Israel.” The words can express confidence in the faithfulness of God. They can also conceal a question that still needs to be answered: What has God promised, to whom does the promise belong, and how does Jesus Christ fulfill it?

This book begins with confidence rather than suspicion. God has not lied to Abraham. He has not forgotten the fathers, discarded His own word, or discovered that His first purpose was unworkable. Israel’s history is indispensable to the biblical story. Through that people came the Scriptures, the covenants, the prophets, and, according to the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ. A Christian cannot despise those gifts without despising the story through which God has made His Son known.

But honoring Israel’s history does not settle the meaning of Israel’s inheritance. The decisive question is what the apostles say about the promises after the Messiah has come. They direct us to one Seed, one olive tree, one new man, one household, and one saving covenant established in the blood of Christ. Jewish believers are not pushed outside that household. Gentile believers are not invited to build another one beside it.

The subtitle, *One Seed. One Covenant. One People.*, does not deny the several covenants recorded in Scripture. Paul himself speaks of Israel’s “covenants” in Romans 9:4. It identifies the unity of the saving inheritance in the promised Seed and the new covenant He mediates. The Abrahamic promise and the Mosaic administration must be distinguished; they must not be turned into competing ways of inheritance after Christ.

This edition develops the original ten-part series into a sustained study. Its purpose is positive: to show the faithfulness of God in His Son. It examines interpretations that divide Israel and the Church into permanently distinct covenant peoples, but it does not presume that every Christian who expects a future Jewish conversion teaches two ways of salvation. Many explicitly confess salvation through Christ alone. Their arguments deserve to be addressed in their strongest form.

The book therefore leaves open the possibility of a great future turning of Jewish people to Christ. Romans 11 gives us abundant reason to pray and hope for their reception. What it does not establish is a saving entrance

around Christ, a second olive tree, or the restoration of an obsolete covenant as the basis of fellowship with God. Further fulfillment must agree with the fulfillment the apostles have already announced.

Scripture quotations are from the King James Version. References in the Scripture Index identify passages quoted or substantively discussed. The Subject Index provides selected entries for the main arguments. Readers should keep a Bible open, follow the longer passages in their setting, and test every conclusion by the word itself.

The Question Behind the Question

There is a fear beneath many discussions of Israel. If the promises do not arrive in the form we expected, has God failed to keep them? If the apostles identify their fulfillment in Christ and His people, has somebody taken an inheritance that belonged to somebody else? And if we question a national restoration scheme, are we questioning the character of God?

Those concerns should not be brushed aside. God's faithfulness is the ground under every believer's feet. A God who could abandon His word to Abraham could abandon His word to us. We cannot defend our theology at the expense of His truthfulness. The answer must begin where Paul begins: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect" (Romans 9:6).

God has not failed

Paul wrote those words while grieving for his unbelieving kinsmen. He did not explain their unbelief by saying Israel had never mattered. He named her privileges and confessed the glory of the Christ who came from her. Yet he also distinguished physical descent from participation in the promise. The failure of many to believe did not prove the failure of God's word. It required a more careful understanding of what that word had always been accomplishing.

The same care is necessary now. Neither the existence of a modern state nor the absence of a restored sacrificial order decides whether God is faithful. That question is answered in the Messiah God has sent, the covenant He has established, and the people He is gathering. Political developments can be significant in human history without becoming the measure of divine truthfulness.

The promises have their Yes in Christ

> For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.
>
> — 2 Corinthians 1:20

Paul places the promises in a Person. This does not mean that every promise had an identical historical audience or that every promised event occurred on the same day. It means that God's faithfulness cannot finally be

understood apart from His Son. Christ is not an interruption between Israel's first calling and a more important calling yet to resume. He is the One to whom the Scriptures bear witness.

On the Emmaus road, Jesus opened Moses and the prophets concerning Himself (Luke 24:27). After His resurrection He explained that the things written in the law, the prophets, and the psalms concerning Him must be fulfilled (Luke 24:44-47). He did not teach the disciples to disregard the Old Testament. He taught them how to read its movement toward His suffering, resurrection, and the proclamation of repentance and remission of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was the beginning of that proclamation, not the address of a second redemption. The nations were included in the promise itself, not admitted during an interval before its main fulfillment. The risen Lord held the story together.

Fulfillment is not the cancellation of history

The word *fulfillment* can be abused. We must not use it to say that God never meant what He said, that Canaan was imaginary, or that Israel's historical experience was merely an illustration for people who came later. Abraham really journeyed. Israel really came out of Egypt. David really ruled. The temple really stood. Those events were acts of God in history.

Yet a real historical gift can carry a purpose larger than its first form. The Passover lamb was a real sacrifice, and Christ is our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). The tabernacle was a real sanctuary, and Hebrews teaches that its ministry served a heavenly pattern (Hebrews 8:5). David had a real throne, and Peter connects God's oath to David with the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus (Acts 2:30-36). The historical form is honored when its appointed goal is reached.

An inheritance enlarged in the Messiah has not become unreal. A priesthood brought to its perfection in Him has not been abandoned. A people united in Him has not become less a people because its membership now reaches the nations. The question is whether Scripture itself takes us from the first gift to this greater fullness.

May the apostles tell us where the promises landed?

This is the governing question of the book. We cannot honor the Old Testament while treating its inspired apostolic exposition as an unwelcome interference. Paul identifies the promised Seed as Christ and those who belong to Christ as Abraham's heirs (Galatians 3:16, 29). Hebrews identifies Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 8:6; 9:15). Peter proclaims the exalted Son of David. These are not later opinions competing with the prophets. They belong to the same inspired revelation.

Nor does apostolic authority give us permission to invent a symbolic meaning for every detail. Scripture interprets Scripture; our imagination does not govern the text. Where the New Testament makes an explicit identification, we should follow it. Where it echoes prophetic imagery, we should explain the connection and its limits. Where Christians differ over a passage, we should state the disagreement honestly and avoid making a disputed detail bear the whole argument.

That is why this book does not depend entirely upon a single interpretation of "all Israel" in Romans 11:26 or the conjunction in Galatians 6:16. The unity of God's people is taught in passages clearer than either disputed expression. Those expressions must be considered within that wider apostolic witness.

Present fulfillment and future hope

Christ's fulfillment does not mean that every promised blessing has already reached its consummation. Believers have the Spirit and still await the redemption of the body (Romans 8:23). Christ reigns and still has enemies to put beneath His feet (1 Corinthians 15:25-26). We have come to the heavenly Jerusalem and still seek the city to come (Hebrews 12:22; 13:14). The future visible appearing of the Lord, bodily resurrection, final judgment, and the new heavens and new earth remain Christian hope.

The distinction is between the fulfillment already secured in Christ and its completion in Him. It is not between a Christian fulfillment that ends and another covenantal center that succeeds it. Whatever remains must honor the Son, His finished sacrifice, His present priesthood, and the unity He has made.

> Fulfillment does not always mean exhaustion. But whatever remains cannot contradict the fulfillment already revealed in Christ.
>
> — The governing principle of this study

We can therefore approach Israel’s promises with confidence. God is faithful. Christ is sufficient. The apostles are trustworthy witnesses. The future belongs to the same Lord who has already opened the way.

1. Which Israel?

The question is sometimes received as an insult. “Which Israel?” can sound as though we are trying to explain away a people whom God plainly chose. But the distinction does not originate with a modern controversy. Paul introduces it while defending the effectiveness of God’s word.

> Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:
>
> — Romans 9:6

The sentence distinguishes within Israel; it does not announce that every later use of the name must mean the Church. Paul still refers to his unbelieving kinsmen as Israelites. We must let each passage identify its own reference. What Romans 9:6 prevents is the assumption that ancestry, by itself, gives every descendant the saving inheritance of the promise.

A real election in history

Paul names the adoption, glory, covenants, law, service of God, promises, and fathers (Romans 9:4-5). These privileges were not counterfeit. Israel received what the nations had not received in the same way. God entrusted His oracles to that people (Romans 3:1-2). The Messiah came through their history according to the flesh.

This honor should govern our tone. A Christian critique of covenantal separation must never slide into contempt for Jewish people. We worship Israel’s Messiah, receive Israel’s Scriptures, and learn from Israel’s prophets. Gentile believers have no cause to congratulate themselves as though they supplied the root of God’s purpose.

But privilege and salvation are not identical. A person can possess the Scriptures and refuse their testimony. A nation can carry the signs of a covenant while many within it reject the God who gave them. Israel’s prophets knew this long before Paul. They called the people to circumcise their hearts, cease trusting in religious appearances, and return to the Lord (Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4; 7:4-7).

That prophetic rebuke was a summons into the truth of Israel’s calling. Paul’s argument continues that summons in the light of the Messiah.

Children of the flesh and children of the promise

> That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.
>
> — Romans 9:8

Ishmael was Abraham's son, yet God identified Isaac as the line through which the covenant promise would proceed. The distinction was not that Ishmael had no humanity, no historical importance, or no place within God's providence. It was that descent from Abraham did not settle the particular question of the promised seed. Romans 9 then carries the argument through Jacob and Esau, before either had done good or evil.

Paul's emphasis is the freedom and faithfulness of God's calling. We should not flatten that argument into a slogan about ethnic inferiority, nor use the chapter to make God responsible for a sinner's unbelief in a way that contradicts Paul's summons to believe. His discussion of mercy and election leads into the righteousness of faith and Israel's stumbling at Christ (Romans 9:30-33). The chapters belong together.

The conclusion is that no pedigree can compel God to confer the inheritance independently of His promise. The family line matters in the history of redemption. It does not become a saving title around the Redeemer.

> Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.
>
> — Romans 9:24-26

The Seed who holds the inheritance

> Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.
>
> — Galatians 3:16

Paul's identification is decisive because it is apostolic exposition. We need not pretend that the ordinary word *seed* can never refer collectively to descendants. It plainly can, and does. Paul's point is that the promise reaches its decisive unity in Christ. The inheritance does not divide into unrelated destinies for competing seeds. It comes to the promised Heir, and those who belong to Him share it.

> And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
>
> — Galatians 3:29

The condition is belonging to Christ. Gentiles are not Abraham's heirs because they have invented a spiritual ancestry. They are heirs because they are joined to the Son in whom the promise is established. Jewish believers belong by that same union. Their ancestry is not denied, but their inheritance is secured in the Messiah rather than in ancestry considered apart from Him.

This is the point at which a theory of two enduring covenant peoples must face the apostolic text. Paul does not say that Jewish believers inherit through Abraham while Gentile believers receive an unrelated portion through Christ. He names all who are Christ's as Abraham's seed. Whatever distinctions remain in human history, they do not create another basis of heirship.

> Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,
>
> — Romans 4:16

One new man

Ephesians 2 describes Gentiles as formerly alienated from Israel's commonwealth and strangers from the covenants of promise. Their distance was real. Then the blood of Christ brought them near (Ephesians 2:11-13). What happened next was not the establishment of a neighboring covenantal household.

> For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
>
> — Ephesians 2:14

Paul goes on to speak of "one new man" and reconciliation of both to God "in one body by the cross" (Ephesians 2:15-16). Both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Gentiles are now fellowcitizens and members of God's household, built together into His dwelling.

The language does more than say that two separate peoples are allowed to get along. Christ has made a new corporate unity in Himself. We should not reduce "both one" to polite cooperation while preserving the very covenantal wall Paul says has been broken down.

Neither does that unity require Jewish believers to pretend they have no Jewish family, culture, or history. Paul remained an Israelite and an apostle of Jesus Christ. The unity concerns access, salvation, membership, and inheritance in the Messiah. A person's history survives conversion; a rival saving foundation does not.

> Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:
>
> — Ephesians 2:15-16

> Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;
>
> — Ephesians 2:19

The danger reaches every religious person

It is easy for a Gentile Christian to read this chapter as a correction intended only for somebody else. That would miss Paul's warning. We also can trust in inherited religion: a Christian family, a respected denomination, a baptism remembered from childhood, or a correct account of covenant theology. Such privileges do not replace living faith in Christ.

The distinction between flesh and promise exposes all boasting in ourselves. We do not improve upon ancestral pride by substituting ecclesiastical pride. A church name can become as much a refuge from repentance as an ancestral name. The promise calls us out of both and into the Son.

Our boast is the cross (Galatians 6:14), our standing is grace, and our inheritance is in Christ. The question "Which Israel?" therefore leads beyond a controversy to a searching confession: God's people are His people because He has made them His in the promised Seed.

Natural Israel was neither a mistake nor a detour. Her historical calling is honored in the Messiah whom she brought forth. That honor does not establish a second saving inheritance after He has come. In Him the promise stands, and in Him the door is open.

2. The Olive Tree Is One

Paul's olive tree is among the clearest pictures in the discussion, and one of the easiest to misuse. A Gentile reader can turn it into a story of superiority: they were removed, we took their place, and the tree now belongs to us. A defender of permanent separation can turn it into a story of two kinds of covenant membership that remain finally distinct. Paul permits neither boast.

The picture is one good olive tree. Some natural branches are broken off. A wild branch is graffed in among the remaining branches and shares with them the root and richness of that tree. Natural branches may be graffed back into their own olive tree. The movement is within one continuing object of God's cultivation.

Some branches, not every branch

> And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;
>
> — Romans 11:17

The word *some* matters. Paul does not describe an entirely Jewish tree being uprooted and replaced by an entirely Gentile tree. Jewish believers remained. Paul himself is evidence. The apostles, the believers at Pentecost, and the remnant according to grace were not discarded when Gentiles began to enter.

The words *among them* and *with them* matter too. Gentiles share what God had already promised and was now bringing to fullness. They do not become a root for the remnant. They are received into blessings they did not originate.

This is why the common expression "the Gentile Church replaced Israel" is misleading. The Church began with Jewish disciples of the Jewish Messiah, and the inclusion of Gentiles enlarged that assembly. Paul's contrast between natural and wild branches continues to acknowledge their historical difference while insisting upon their participation in one tree.

What is the root?

> For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.
>
> — Romans 11:16

Paul does not attach a separate explanatory label to the root in Romans 11:16-18. Its connection with the fathers and God's promises is the most natural reading in the surrounding argument. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were set apart within God's covenantal purpose; the promises entrusted to them sustain the story. Those promises reach their fulfillment in Christ.

We should therefore avoid making the picture more exact than Paul makes it. The word *root* need not be equated mechanically with a modern state, nor should every detail be forced into a diagram of church government. The essential point is that the incoming branch depends upon God's prior promise and grace. The tree does not live because Gentiles have made it impressive.

Christ is central to the promise's fulfillment. He is Abraham's Seed and the mediator of the new covenant. But when explaining this particular metaphor, it is more careful to speak of the patriarchal promise brought to fulfillment in Him than to claim that Paul explicitly defines the root as Christ in this verse.

That care strengthens the argument. We can recognize the rootedness of the Church in Israel's history without treating unbelieving ancestry as sufficient for saving participation.

Broken off through unbelief

> Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:
>
> — Romans 11:20

Paul identifies the cause of exclusion. It is unbelief. He also identifies the standing of the incoming branch. It stands by faith. Ethnic origin explains the imagery of natural and wild branches; it does not establish two different ways of remaining in the tree.

This rules out a saving covenantal security possessed by unbelieving people simply because of their ancestry. Paul can affirm that they are beloved for the fathers' sakes and still describe their present estrangement concerning

the gospel (Romans 11:28). We must preserve both statements. Historical election gives us reason to hope and pray for their reception. It does not make rejection of Christ another form of salvation.

The same verse rules out Gentile presumption. The incoming branch is not secure through being Gentile, Protestant, evangelical, or correctly informed about Israel. Its standing is faith. Paul's warning is addressed to people who have received mercy, and he does not soften it into an empty rhetorical exercise.

Goodness and severity

> Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.
>
> — Romans 11:22

Romans 11:22 calls us to behold both God's goodness and His severity. The severity fell upon those who fell; the goodness is enjoyed by those who continue in it. Paul explicitly warns that the boasting Gentile branch also can be cut off.

Different Christian traditions explain the relation of this corporate warning to individual perseverance in different ways. The passage's practical force is clear before that discussion is settled. Grace gives no permission for unbelief, superiority, or contempt. To claim the promise while refusing the faith by which we stand is to contradict Paul.

The fear he commands is not a return to anxious self-salvation. It is the humble recognition that the living God sustains us. The answer to fear is continued dependence upon Christ, not a more elaborate pedigree. God's goodness is not a possession we detach from Him and carry away.

An interpretation of Romans 11 that leaves us proud has gone wrong somewhere. Even a conclusion that is doctrinally accurate can be handled in a spirit the chapter rebukes. Paul means to humble the Gentile believer as well as to open hope for the natural branch.

Graffed in again

> And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again.
>
> — Romans 11:23

This is a promise of ability, invitation, and hope. God is able. The unbelief need not continue. The broken branch need not remain broken. It would be as unfaithful to shut this door as to invent another door.

Paul goes farther: the natural branches belong to “their own olive tree” (Romans 11:24). Their return accords with the promise’s history. We need not be embarrassed by the special tenderness and expectation that language permits. God has not forgotten the fathers, and the gospel is not hostile to their descendants.

But the return is into the same tree. Paul does not describe a future transplant from the one body of Christ into a restored saving administration alongside it. He does not say that unbelief becomes acceptable after a certain date. He says they will be graffed in if they do not remain in unbelief.

A large future reception of Jewish people fits the metaphor perfectly. It would display God’s power to restore, His mercy to the disobedient, and His faithfulness to the fathers. Its size would not change its nature. A multitude of natural branches would still share the one root with the believing branches already there.

> For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree?
>
> — Romans 11:24

Jealousy that leads to life

Paul’s ministry to Gentiles had a Jewish purpose as well. He hoped to provoke his kinsmen to emulation and save some of them (Romans 11:13-14). The Gentiles’ blessing was meant to awaken desire for the God who had blessed them, not to humiliate Jewish people into submission.

What kind of Christian life can serve that purpose? A life displaying God’s mercy, holiness, and welcome. A community in which the Scriptures bear fruit and the Messiah is loved. A people who honor the fathers while inviting their descendants to the Son. Political antagonism and religious mockery do not achieve Paul’s purpose; neither does withholding the gospel out of embarrassment.

We should be able to say plainly that Jesus is the only Saviour, and say it with affection. Conviction and kindness are not enemies. The apostle who

warned about unbelief was the apostle who carried continual sorrow for his brethren (Romans 9:1-3).

The olive tree gives us the proper posture: gratitude for the root, fear of boasting, confidence in God’s restoring power, and hope for those not yet believing, all of it held within one tree, one root, and one people sharing mercy in Christ.

3. “All Israel” Is Not a Second Plan

Romans 11:25-29 deserves slow reading. A short slogan cannot do justice to the mystery Paul announces, the hope he holds out, or the warning he gives. The passage is often made to carry a complete national restoration scheme. It is also sometimes compressed into a definition that leaves no room for a significant future Jewish conversion. Neither shortcut serves the reader.

> For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.
>
> — Romans 11:25

> And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
>
> — Romans 11:26

> For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.
>
> — Romans 11:27

These sentences must remain within Paul’s discussion of the remnant, the Gentiles’ reception, and the natural branches’ possible return. They must also remain beside Romans 10, where the same Lord saves Jew and Greek through faith and confession of Christ.

What the mystery corrects

Paul introduces the mystery to prevent conceit. Gentile readers might assume that Israel’s unbelief proved permanent divine rejection or their own superiority. He tells them that the blindness is partial, that Gentile fullness belongs to the story, and that Israel’s salvation is grounded in the covenantal mercy of the Deliverer.

The mystery is not merely the bare fact that Gentiles can receive blessing; the prophets had already spoken of the nations. It concerns the manner in which partial Jewish hardening, Gentile inclusion, and God’s saving purpose for Israel fit together. Paul is disclosing the shape of that purpose in the gospel era.

We therefore should not describe the mystery as though Romans 11 only repeats a generic statement of Gentile salvation. Nor should we leap from

the word *mystery* to a separate saving program. Paul explains the mystery through one tree, one mercy, and the taking away of sins.

“In part” is not an empty qualification

Blindness has not fallen upon every Jewish person. The present remnant disproves that. Paul is an Israelite who believes; so are many others. God has not emptied Israel of faith while He deals with the nations. The salvation of Gentiles occurs alongside the continued salvation of Jews.

The hardening is also not a reason to abandon evangelism. Paul magnifies his Gentile ministry partly to save some of his own flesh. He expects the gospel to reach Jewish people in his own day. An interpretation that turns every Jewish conversion into an exception to God’s current purpose cannot account for Paul’s ministry.

The phrase *in part* keeps us from universalizing the rejection. It prepares us to hope for reception rather than to pronounce an entire people beyond mercy.

What does “until” establish?

The hardening is described in relation to the fullness of the Gentiles. A future conversion reading reasonably takes this as opening an expectation of a change in Israel’s condition. We should acknowledge that force instead of pretending the word has no temporal significance.

But *until* does not, by itself, specify all the features of what follows. It does not identify a restored Levitical priesthood, prescribe territorial boundaries, or create a different basis of salvation. Those conclusions require other texts and must be assessed against the New Testament’s teaching concerning covenant and sacrifice.

In particular, Gentile fullness need not mean that every individual Gentile will be saved. It speaks of the fullness belonging to God’s purpose. Similarly, “all Israel” need not mean that every descendant of Jacob in every generation will be saved irrespective of faith. Paul’s entire argument forbids salvation through unbelief.

We must allow the verse its hope while refusing to load it with details it does not state.

> Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?
>
> — Romans 11:12

> For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?
>
> — Romans 11:15

Three principal readings

One reading understands “all Israel” as the whole redeemed people of God, Jews and Gentiles together in the Messiah. It emphasizes Romans 9:6-8, the one olive tree, Abraham’s seed in Galatians 3, and the unified people of Ephesians 2. On this reading Paul describes the completion of God’s Israel through the saving process he has just explained.

That reading fits the larger unity of the apostolic teaching. It has a real difficulty here: Paul has just used *Israel* in verse 25 for the Jewish people distinguished from the Gentiles. A change of reference in verse 26 is possible, but it must be argued rather than assumed. Romans 9:6 does not automatically settle every subsequent occurrence of the name.

A second reading understands “all Israel” as the full company of Jewish people who are saved throughout the gospel age. It sees the remnant becoming complete by God’s continuing mercy, without requiring a single final national event. This preserves a Jewish reference while stressing the pattern of saving natural branches across time. It must explain the particular relationship between Gentile fullness and the resulting fullness of Israel.

A third reading expects a substantial future turning of Jewish people to Christ. It stresses the distinction between Israel and Gentiles in verse 25, the hope of Jewish “fulness” in verse 12, their “receiving” in verse 15, and the natural branches’ return. This is a serious exegetical reading. Holding it does not, by itself, make a Christian a dispensationalist.

My judgment is that “Israel” most naturally continues to refer to the Jewish people in this immediate passage, as it does in verse 25. The contrast with Gentiles and the reference to the fathers in verses 28-31 favor that reading. Whether Paul describes the complete Jewish remnant gathered across the gospel age or a climactic future ingathering is a further question; the language of fullness and reception gives substantial reason to hope for the latter. The wider truth that Jews and Gentiles form one redeemed people

does not require every occurrence of the name Israel to designate that whole people. The book's conclusion holds under each reading: the Deliverer saves from sin, and natural branches are received into the olive tree already there.

"And so" does not abolish sequence

The expression "And so" describes the way the announced salvation comes about. It should not be rewritten as though Paul had said, "And by an unrelated covenant." But neither should its manner of expression be used to rule out a sequence that the surrounding sentences may suggest.

God may bring a future Jewish fullness through the very pattern Paul has described: Gentile mercy provoking Jewish response, natural branches leaving unbelief, and the Deliverer taking away sin. Manner and timing are not enemies. A future event can occur in the same saving manner already established by the gospel.

The essential question is therefore not whether Paul permits a future turning. He plainly permits us to hope for Jewish reception. The question is whether such a turning would revive the covenantal separation abolished in Christ. Nothing in "And so" requires that conclusion.

The Deliverer takes away sins

Paul's cited prophetic language draws upon Isaiah 59:20-21 and the removal of sins described in Isaiah 27:9. Readers should compare the passages rather than expect every phrase of the KJV Old Testament to appear unchanged in Paul's citation. The apostle presents the promise through the Deliverer who turns ungodliness away from Jacob and establishes the covenant by taking away sins.

Notice what he makes central. He does not define salvation as possession of land, international recognition, or the resumption of animal offerings. He defines it by deliverance from ungodliness and the removal of sin. Those are the blessings the new covenant secures through the blood of Christ.

Jesus has already come as the Deliverer. Peter preached Him to Israel as God's risen Son, sent first to bless them by turning them from their iniquities (Acts 3:26). His future appearing is real, and further saving acts of His mercy are possible. But they will not require another Saviour or another atonement. The One who will appear is the One who has already died and risen.

“All Israel shall be saved” is thus a promise to magnify the saving Messiah, not permission to move the discussion away from Him. Whatever the scope of the phrase, the beneficiaries are saved from sin by the Deliverer.

> Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.
>
> — Acts 3:26

Beloved for the fathers’ sakes

> As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.
>
> — Romans 11:28

This verse will not allow us to dismiss unbelieving Jewish people as though God had no continuing concern for them. Paul holds together their present opposition to the gospel and their beloved place in relation to the fathers. The gifts and calling of God are “without repentance” (Romans 11:29): He does not retract His purpose in embarrassment or discover that His promise was a mistake.

But *beloved* is not a declaration that unbelief is saving faith. The chapter has already made unbelief the reason branches were broken off. The same apostle prays for Israel’s salvation because their present religious zeal does not supply it (Romans 10:1-4). Continuing divine purpose and the need for conversion belong together.

Romans 11:30-32 then explains the movement in terms of mercy. Gentiles received mercy despite disobedience; Jewish people are also to receive mercy. God has shut both up to disobedience so that neither group can claim independent righteousness. The passage does not teach the automatic salvation of every human being. It levels the claim of both groups and exalts the mercy upon which salvation depends.

The test: what does Jewish reception establish?

Let us grant the strongest future conversion reading for the sake of argument. Suppose Paul promises a great turning of Jewish people after the Gentile fullness. What has then been established? A great turning to the Deliverer, the removal of sin, and reception of natural branches into their own olive tree.

What has not been established? A second body of the redeemed, a Mosaic basis of righteousness, a saving priesthood alongside Christ's, or an atoning sacrifice alongside His finished offering. Those are additional proposals. Romans 11 cannot be cited as though it had stated them.

Some Christians who expect future Jewish conversion affirm this conclusion gladly. Their hope can be held within one new covenant and one people of Christ. Others expect a distinct national administration while insisting on the same gospel. Their proposals must be examined passage by passage, especially in relation to Hebrews and Ephesians; calling the expected conversion "national" does not decide the covenantal question.

The book's disagreement is therefore precise. We reject the inference that Jewish reception requires a permanent division of the redeemed or a return to the forms Christ has fulfilled. We welcome the hope that many Jewish people will receive their Messiah.

The proper end of the chapter

Paul ends in worship, not in a timetable drawn with unwarranted certainty. The depth of God's wisdom exceeds our mastery (Romans 11:33-36). That conclusion should govern the way we hold our interpretations.

We need neither flatten the mystery nor multiply covenants to preserve it. God's faithfulness is large enough for Gentile fullness and Jewish mercy. The gospel we preach today is the gospel by which either will be saved: one gospel, one tree, and one Deliverer who takes away sins.

4. The Israel of God Walks by One Rule

Paul’s closing blessing in Galatians is brief, but its setting is rich. He has defended the gospel, rebuked reliance upon the law for justification, identified Christ as Abraham’s Seed, and called believers to walk in the Spirit. At the end he returns to the cross and the new creation.

> But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.
>
> — Galatians 6:14

> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.
>
> — Galatians 6:15

> And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.
>
> — Galatians 6:16

The blessing belongs within that movement. It cannot be used to reopen a saving distinction that the letter has repeatedly refused.

The rule is the new creation

Circumcision was not a trivial sign in Israel’s history. God gave it to Abraham and required it in his household. Paul’s declaration that it does not avail in Christ is therefore profound. He is not correcting an insignificant custom. He is locating covenantal standing in something greater than the fleshly sign.

But he adds that uncircumcision does not avail either. A Gentile cannot turn the absence of circumcision into a mark of superior spirituality. The cross removes confidence in either condition. The question is whether a person belongs to Christ and shares His new life.

The rule is thus neither Jewish ceremony nor Gentile independence. It is the new creation. Elsewhere Paul says that if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). Galatians describes the practical walk that corresponds to that reality: faith working by love, life in the Spirit, bearing

one another's burdens, and sowing to the Spirit rather than the flesh (Galatians 5:6, 16; 6:2, 8).

A theological use of the phrase "Israel of God" that bypasses this life would be foreign to the letter. Paul is blessing people who walk according to the rule he has just stated.

Two readings of the blessing

The expression "and upon the Israel of God" has been understood in more than one way. One reading takes the final phrase as another designation for the whole company walking by the new creation rule: believing Jews and Gentiles together. The conjunction introduces or emphasizes the name of the people already described.

That interpretation fits the letter's repeated unity of those who belong to Christ. Gentiles are Abraham's children through faith; the Jerusalem above is the mother of believers; circumcision and uncircumcision do not determine their standing (Galatians 3:7, 29; 4:26; 6:15). The language of God's Israel can therefore be read as the covenantal name of the renewed people in Christ.

A second reading takes the final phrase as a particular blessing upon Jewish believers within the larger company. On this reading Paul first blesses all who walk by the rule, then gives special recognition to faithful Jewish Christians, distinguished from those pressuring Gentiles to accept circumcision.

The grammar and reference are disputed. We should not claim that the English word *and*, standing by itself, makes only one reading possible. Nor should we portray the second reading as necessarily teaching two separate peoples. A particular reference to Jewish believers can acknowledge their identity within the one Church.

The argument that survives both readings is stronger than a claim resting entirely upon the conjunction. If "the Israel of God" means the whole renewed people, the unity is explicit. If it means Jewish believers particularly, they receive peace and mercy as believers in Christ, within the new creation rule, not through a rival covenantal standing outside it.

What kind of Israel receives the blessing?

Under the particular Jewish believer reading, we should ask who those believers are. They are not people relying on circumcision for justification. They are not the agitators who compelled Gentiles to submit to the law. They are Jewish people whose glory is the cross and whose life is in the Spirit.

Paul's warning is severe:

> Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.
>
> — Galatians 5:4

He cannot reverse that warning in his final blessing. Whatever precise scope we assign to "Israel of God," it is an Israel standing in grace, not one whose law observance makes Christ unnecessary. The Jewish believers who receive the blessing are witnesses to Israel's promise fulfilled in her Messiah.

The text therefore provides no support for the salvation of an unbelieving nation independently of Christ. Nor does it establish an inheritance in which Jewish believers are separated from their Gentile brethren. Such conclusions would need to be imported from somewhere else.

One in Christ does not erase humanity

> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
>
> — Galatians 3:28

The verse does not mean that people cease to be male or female, that every social circumstance instantly disappears, or that cultural histories become indistinguishable. It means these conditions do not establish higher and lower classes of covenantal access and inheritance. All are one in Christ, and the next verse names them Abraham's seed.

We should apply the same precision to Jew and Greek. Union does not require historical amnesia. It does require the refusal of spiritual caste. There is no inner covenantal circle entered through bloodline while the rest of Christ's body waits outside.

Ephesians 3:6 reinforces the point with three expressions: Gentiles are fellowheirs, of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ by

the gospel. The qualifications are the same gospel and the same Christ. Shared vocabulary alone could be dismissed as resemblance; shared heirship and shared body cannot so easily be dismissed.

> That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:
>
> — Ephesians 3:6

Circumcision of the heart

Romans 2:28-29 distinguishes outward Jewishness and outward circumcision from the inward work whose praise comes from God. The immediate discussion concerns the inadequacy of outward religious privilege without obedience. It should not be treated as a universal dictionary in which every occurrence of *Jew* now means Gentile Christian.

Yet the distinction reaches the heart of the matter. God requires inward reality. This concern did not begin with Paul: Moses and the prophets had already called for circumcision of heart. The new covenant brings the inward renewal toward which that summons pointed.

> For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.
>
> — Philippians 3:3

Paul addresses believers and names the marks of their standing: worship by the Spirit, rejoicing in Christ, and the surrender of confidence in the flesh. He then lists his own impressive ancestry and religious attainment, only to count them loss for the excellency of knowing Christ (Philippians 3:4-9). The apostle does not despise God’s gifts to Israel. He refuses to use them as substitutes for the Son.

> For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.
>
> — Romans 2:28-29

> And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.
>
> — Deuteronomy 30:6

> Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.
>
> — Exodus 19:5-6

> But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.
>
> — 1 Peter 2:9-10

Peter applies these covenantal titles to those who have come to Christ, the living stone (1 Peter 2:4-10). The argument rests on their relation to Him and the mercy they have received. The titles call this people to holy service and proclamation; they are not a warrant for confidence in ancestry.

A rule for the reader

The rule of new creation also corrects the person writing or reading this book. We can defend fulfillment in Christ and still glory in our cleverness. We can oppose fleshly confidence while trusting our own theological precision. Paul leaves no room for that exchange.

If the cross is our boast, our lives must be brought under it. Our treatment of others should display the mercy we confess. Our fellowship should reflect the unity we defend. Our obedience should grow from the Spirit’s life, not from a desire to prove ourselves superior to another party.

The Israel of God is not a trophy for winning an argument. It names a people upon whom peace and mercy rest in relation to Christ. Whether the final phrase designates the whole renewed company or particularly its Jewish members, the governing rule remains the same.

The cross establishes one rule for our shared life in the new creation.

5. “Everlasting” and the Covenant Beside It

The word *everlasting* deserves reverence. When God promises something enduring, we are not entitled to shorten His faithfulness to fit a preferred theory. But neither are we entitled to detach the word from its covenantal setting and require every historical form associated with it to continue unchanged after Christ.

The question is not whether God means what He says. He does. The question is how the Bible itself explains the enduring purpose of God as covenants, signs, priesthood, and sacrifices reach their appointed goal.

Begin with the covenant, not a lexical escape

Sometimes this discussion becomes an argument over the Hebrew word commonly represented as *olam*. We are told either that it must always mean endless duration in exactly the same form or that it only means a very long but limited time. Neither shortcut should carry our theology.

This book does not need to weaken the English word *everlasting* or claim that God’s eternal promises expire. Its argument rests upon inspired covenantal exposition. The New Testament can affirm God’s enduring faithfulness while announcing a change of priesthood, the obsolescence of the first covenant, and the completion of repeated offerings in Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice.

To understand those announcements, we must read the enduring language beside the administration to which it belongs, then listen to the apostles explain its fulfillment.

Circumcision and the promised Seed

> And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
> — Genesis 17:13

God gave circumcision as the covenantal sign in Abraham’s household. The same chapter contains the promise of Canaan as an everlasting possession (Genesis 17:8). We cannot isolate the land language while refusing to

consider what the apostolic writings say about the fleshly sign in the same covenantal passage.

Paul insists that circumcision does not avail for standing in Christ; faith working by love does (Galatians 5:6). He rejects compelling Gentile believers to be circumcised as a necessary entrance into the inheritance. Acts 15 likewise refuses to impose that requirement upon the nations.

Does that mean Abraham's covenant has become untrue? Paul's answer is the opposite. The promise is kept in Christ, the Seed. The law given later could not disannul it (Galatians 3:17). Those in Christ are Abraham's heirs. The fleshly sign does not become the final measure of the promise's fulfillment.

This is an important distinction. The Abrahamic promise must not simply be identified with the Mosaic covenant and discarded because Hebrews calls the first covenant old. Paul carefully distinguishes promise and law. The promise abides; the Messiah determines how its inheritance is received. We do not solve the land question merely by declaring all earlier covenants obsolete.

An everlasting priesthood and a changed priesthood

> And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.
>
> — Numbers 25:13

The promise concerning Phinehas belongs to the priestly order established within Israel's covenantal worship. That order had a real divine appointment. It was not a human mistake that Christ later corrected.

Yet Hebrews proclaims a greater priesthood. Jesus arose from Judah, not Levi, and His priesthood follows the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:11-17). The writer does not preserve the former administration as a second saving ministry alongside Him.

> For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.
>
> — Hebrews 7:12

God's faithfulness is expressed in the High Priest who lives for ever, whose sacrifice is sufficient, and through whom we draw nigh to God. We honor

the earlier priesthood by receiving the perfection toward which it pointed. We dishonor its purpose if we make its continued form more decisive than the Priest whom God has installed by His oath.

We should not try to assign an exact individual fulfillment to every feature of the Phinehas promise without textual warrant. The sufficient point is that enduring priestly language does not authorize us to contradict Hebrews' explicit announcement of the changed priesthood.

> But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.
>
> — Hebrews 7:24-25

The Sabbath covenant and the substance

> Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.
>
> — Exodus 31:16

The next verse calls the Sabbath a sign between God and the children of Israel for ever. Its covenantal identity is plain. The sign testified to the Creator and marked Israel's life under the covenant.

Colossians 2:16-17 forbids judgment of believers in respect of food, holy days, new moons, and Sabbath days, describing them as shadows whose body is of Christ. Hebrews 4 carries the promise of rest into the summons to enter God's rest through faith and obedience. The New Testament does not invite believers to despise God's rest; it brings them into its living reality in the Son.

Christians differ over how the weekly day should be observed and how moral creation patterns relate to Israel's sign. That wider discussion need not be settled here. What cannot be maintained is that the phrase *perpetual covenant* makes the Mosaic sign an independent saving badge or excludes Gentile believers from the rest Christ gives.

> Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.
>
> — Colossians 2:16-17

Annual atonement and the finished offering

> And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.
>
> — Leviticus 16:34

Here the enduring language is attached to an annual atoning rite. Hebrews describes that rite and its limitations with precision. The high priest entered with blood not his own; the repeated ministry could not perfect the conscience; the pattern continued until the appointed reformation (Hebrews 9:7-10).

Christ entered by His own blood and obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). He does not offer Himself year after year. His once-for-all sacrifice has accomplished what the annual shadow anticipated.

> Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.
>
> — Hebrews 10:18

If *everlasting statute* required the perpetual continuation of every original ceremonial form, this sentence would be impossible. Yet both are Scripture. The resolution is not that God lied in Leviticus. It is that God's appointed atonement has reached its perfection in the sacrifice to which Leviticus pointed.

The enduring reality is more secure, not less. Repeated animal blood has given way to the eternal efficacy of Christ's blood. The old rite is not preserved by placing it beside Him as another covenantal means of cleansing.

> Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.
>
> — Hebrews 9:12

The first covenant and the better covenant

> In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.
>
> — Hebrews 8:13

The first covenant in this discussion is the covenant made when God brought Israel out of Egypt. Hebrews is not declaring every earlier divine

promise false. It is explaining that Jeremiah's promise of a new covenant necessarily identifies the Mosaic covenant as old.

The new covenant provides inward law, knowledge of God, and sins remembered no more. Jesus is its mediator. These realities fulfill the purpose that the earlier administration could announce but could not perfect through its repeated ceremonies.

We should therefore resist a selective literalism that insists upon every old form when speaking of Israel's future, but accepts apostolic fulfillment when speaking of circumcision or atonement. The same inspired method must govern the whole discussion.

David and the Levitical priests in Jeremiah 33

Jeremiah 33:17-22 places enduring promises concerning David and the Levitical ministry beside the dependable order of day and night. A reader who invokes the royal promise's enduring language must also face the priestly promise beside it. Both belong to God's assurance of faithful restoration.

The Christian reading must then reckon with the explicit teaching of Hebrews 7:11-28. Jesus belongs to Judah, holds the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, and lives for ever. The change of priesthood accompanies a change of law. We cannot preserve one prophet's promise by contradicting the inspired explanation of the Priest God has appointed.

This does not make the Levitical words imaginary or their historical service worthless. They belong to the forms through which God promised and administered holy worship. The final fulfillment brings enduring kingship and effectual priestly access together in Christ. The exact relation of each historical feature to its greater fulfillment requires exposition; the word everlasting alone cannot establish that both former offices must operate unchanged beside Him.

What follows for the land promise?

The examples do not, by themselves, settle every question about territory. Land is not identical to a ceremonial sacrifice, and the Abrahamic promise is not identical to Sinai. A careful argument must examine Genesis, Joshua, the prophets, Romans 4, Galatians 3, and Hebrews 11 together. Chapter 10 undertakes that work.

What the examples establish is a necessary caution: the word *everlasting* alone cannot prove that the promise must remain in its earliest territorial or administrative form. We must ask how the inspired witnesses describe its heir, scope, and consummation.

Paul names Abraham heir of the world (Romans 4:13). Hebrews describes the patriarchs seeking a better, heavenly country and a city God has prepared (Hebrews 11:13-16). Jesus promises the meek the earth (Matthew 5:5). These statements do not make the inheritance less real. They teach us to expect its fullness in the Messiah and the new creation.

God’s faithfulness is not trapped in the shadow

There is a pastoral danger in this debate. We may begin by defending God’s promises and end by treating Christ as the threat to them. We insist upon the sign against the inward work, the annual rite against eternal redemption, or the former priesthood against the living High Priest. That reverses the Scriptures’ movement.

The answer is not to belittle the shadow. It was God’s gift and served His purpose. The answer is to receive the substance with gratitude. The child does not dishonor a promise by receiving more than the first outline allowed him to imagine.

There is one Seed and one inheritance held in Him; the faithfulness of God is everlasting, and His Son is its living assurance.

6. God Hath Not Cast Away His People

If we had only heard that branches were broken off, we might imagine Paul had announced the end of Jewish hope. He anticipates that conclusion before developing the tree imagery and rejects it emphatically.

> I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.
>
> — Romans 11:1

Paul answers with a living witness: himself. He is not a Gentile replacement for a rejected Israelite. He is an Israelite brought to faith in the Messiah. God's mercy to him proves that Jewish unbelief is neither universal nor an irreversible verdict upon every descendant of the fathers.

Elijah's mistaken loneliness

Paul recalls Elijah, who believed himself alone amid Israel's apostasy. The prophet saw murdered prophets, broken altars, and the danger to his own life. His grief was real, but his conclusion did not account for God's hidden keeping.

The Lord had reserved seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal (Romans 11:2-4; 1 Kings 19:18). The faithfulness of God was not measured by the prophet's visible companionship. A remnant existed because God had kept a people for Himself.

That history matters to Paul's argument. Israel's general unbelief does not exhaust the account of Israel. The people who receive God's mercy are not invented after the failure of His promise; they are the evidence that His purpose is still effective.

It also matters to weary Christians. We can confuse the noise of apostasy with the total defeat of faith. God knows people whom we cannot see. He is not dependent upon our ability to count His witnesses.

A present remnant according to grace

> Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.
>
> — Romans 11:5

The remnant is present. Paul does not require his readers to wait for a distant national event before they can see God's faithfulness to Israel. Jewish believers in his own day belong to God's current saving work.

The remnant is also according to grace. It is not a company who earned the promise by greater ancestral purity, superior religious attainment, or a merit that God could not resist. Grace identifies the source of their salvation and removes boasting.

Romans 11:6 sharply distinguishes grace from works. We should preserve that distinction without saying that physical descent and meritorious works are exactly the same thing. Paul's categories are related in his wider argument, but they are not interchangeable. Jewish ancestry is a historical fact. Reliance upon works is a claim about how one obtains righteousness. Neither can substitute for the mercy God gives in Christ.

The remnant therefore answers the rejection question while keeping the gospel at the center. Israel has believers, and their faith is the fruit of grace. The same grace receives Gentiles. A remnant is not evidence for another way of belonging to God.

The remnant is not an elite caste

The word *remnant* can be turned into a badge of spiritual superiority. A small group may imagine itself the only company God truly recognizes, particularly if it has separated from a corrupt religious environment. Paul's use of the word gives no support to that arrogance.

The remnant is evidence of divine mercy, not a party entitled to despise the rest. Paul belonged to it, yet his heart's desire was the salvation of those still unbelieving. Election did not make him indifferent; grace made him a servant.

Nor should the remnant be used to limit what God may do in the future. The seven thousand disproved Elijah's claim of total isolation. Paul's present remnant disproved total rejection. Neither fact establishes that God can never bring a much larger company to faith. Romans 11:12 and 15 invite

hope for fullness and reception. The faithful remnant is the beginning of an answer, not permission to stop praying.

Has Israel stumbled beyond recovery?

> I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.
>
> — Romans 11:11

Paul distinguishes the real stumbling from the conclusion that it has placed Israel beyond recovery. The unbelief has brought judgment, but God has also used the situation to bring the nations into mercy. That Gentile mercy serves, in turn, to awaken Jewish response.

The passage does not turn sin into something innocent because God overrules it. Nor does it portray Gentile inclusion as an unfortunate detour. God's wisdom works through human disobedience without approving it, bringing mercy to people who could not claim it by right.

Paul's expectation is expansive. If Israel's diminishing has brought riches to the nations, what may their fullness bring? If their casting away has accompanied reconciliation, what might their reception mean but "life from the dead" (Romans 11:12, 15)? The language deserves its full force. We should not reduce it to a cold assurance that a few isolated Jewish conversions are theoretically possible.

At the same time, the figurative phrase "life from the dead" should not be used to establish a complete resurrection timetable without further argument. It expresses extraordinary blessing. Its precise relation to final resurrection is debated; the hope of reception itself is clear.

> And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
>
> — Genesis 12:3

> And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
>
> — Galatians 3:8

The gifts and calling are not withdrawn

> For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.
>
> — Romans 11:29

This sentence concerns the irrevocability of God's purpose. He does not repent of His calling as though His promises were ill-considered. It should be read with verse 28's beloved relation to the fathers and verses 30-32's unfolding mercy.

The privileges listed in Romans 9:4-5 illuminate the discussion, although they occur two chapters earlier and are not an explicit itemized definition of the "gifts" in Romans 11:29. Adoption, glory, covenants, law, worship, promises, fathers, and the Messiah belong to Israel's honored history. God has not repudiated that history.

His irrevocable purpose gives us reason to expect saving mercy. It does not tell us that every form of covenantal administration remains permanently operative. The same God who called Israel also promised the new covenant and established the changed priesthood in Christ. Irrevocability cannot be used to make one divine promise contradict another.

"Without repentance" also does not mean "without Christ." Paul has spent these chapters showing why unbelieving people need the gospel. A calling that reaches its goal in the Messiah is no less faithful because its saving blessings are received in Him.

Beloved people still need the gospel

This is a difficult truth to hold with the proper spirit. We can preserve divine concern while losing the urgency of conversion, or preserve the necessity of conversion while speaking as though God had no tender purpose toward Jewish people. Paul allows neither failure.

He recognizes their zeal, loves them, and prays that they might be saved (Romans 10:1-2). He does not confuse their religious sincerity with the righteousness of faith. He also does not confuse their need with a reason for contempt.

That combination should shape our preaching. We need not pretend that all beliefs are saving paths. We need not diminish Jewish history to proclaim Jesus. We can honor what God has given and insist upon the Son in whom it finds its goal.

Gentiles should hear the same summons for themselves. We once disobeyed and now have obtained mercy. The mercy received should make us eager to see mercy extended, especially to the natural branches whose root we share.

Faithfulness with an open door

Paul’s answer is therefore both present and hopeful. God has not cast away His people: a remnant lives by grace now. God is able to graff natural branches in again: their unbelief need not be their final condition. His gifts and calling have not been recalled: the fathers’ promise still belongs to His faithful purpose.

None of this creates another entrance into salvation. It keeps the entrance open through the Messiah. A future Jewish fullness would magnify the same grace that saved Paul and brought the Gentiles near.

One calling is carried forward in Christ, one mercy reaches those who cannot save themselves, and one people is kept by grace.

7. The New Covenant Was Made with Israel

Jeremiah's promise has a definite address. We should begin by acknowledging it rather than trying to make the words say something else.

> Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
>
> — Jeremiah 31:31

The promise was spoken to Israel and Judah. It arose within the story of their broken covenant, judgment, and promised restoration. Gentile inclusion must not be explained as though God had secretly changed the address or confiscated the promise after the recipients failed to appreciate it.

The answer lies in the Messiah who came to Israel, established the covenant in His blood, and brought the nations into the people He gathers. Israel received the proclamation first. Gentiles share its blessings through Him.

A covenant unlike the one they broke

Jeremiah distinguishes the new covenant from the covenant made when God brought the fathers out of Egypt (Jeremiah 31:32). The problem was not that God's law was evil. The people broke the covenant. The new promise addresses the inward life and the removal of sin.

> But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.
>
> — Jeremiah 31:33

Knowledge of God and sins remembered no more follow in Jeremiah 31:34. The promised restoration is therefore deeper than a return to location or ceremony. It concerns a people inwardly renewed and reconciled to God.

The new covenant is not simply Sinai reissued with a more favorable political situation. Jeremiah explicitly says it is not according to the covenant they broke. Any account of Israel's future that calls the Mosaic administration itself the new covenant must reckon with that contrast.

Hebrews identifies the mediator now

Hebrews 8 quotes Jeremiah at length. It does not present the prophecy as an interesting arrangement irrelevant to the writer's hearers. It identifies Jesus as the mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises (Hebrews 8:6), then explains the old covenant's obsolescence.

Hebrews 9:15 again names Him the mediator of the new testament and relates His death to redemption and the eternal inheritance. Hebrews 10:15-18 quotes the inward law and the remembrance of sins no more, concluding that where remission exists there is no more offering for sin.

The movement is unmistakable: Jeremiah's promise, Christ's mediatorship, Christ's death, actual forgiveness, and the believer's present access to God. The writer does not ask us to reserve all this for a people who will enter a different covenant after the Church's story ends.

It is also unnecessary to prove the precise ethnic composition of every original reader of Hebrews before receiving this teaching. The identity of the mediator and the sufficiency of His sacrifice belong to the whole apostolic gospel. The question is whether other apostolic writings place Gentile Christians within these realities. They do.

> But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.
>
> — Hebrews 8:6

The cup given to the disciples and to Corinth

> Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.
>
> — Luke 22:20

Jesus announced the covenantal meaning of the cup on the night before His death. The covenant was established through the blood He actually shed at the cross. We should not confuse the announcement at the supper with the completed sacrifice of the following day.

His first recipients were Jewish disciples. The Messiah did not begin by withholding Israel's covenant from Israel. He gave Himself to establish what the prophet had promised.

Paul then handed the same testimony to the church in Corinth: the cup is the new testament in Christ's blood (1 Corinthians 11:25). The presence of Gentile converts is explicit elsewhere in the letter (1 Corinthians 12:2). Paul did not give them a different blood or a merely neighboring blessing with no covenantal relation to Christ's cup.

Their participation does not mean every detail of Jeremiah's promised consummation had already appeared in their lives. They still required discipline, growth, and perseverance. Present covenantal participation and future perfection belong together, just as the gift of the Spirit and the redemption of the body belong together.

Ministers of the new testament

Paul describes his apostolic ministry in language that directly answers the exclusion of Gentile believers from the new covenant:

> Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.
>
> — 2 Corinthians 3:6

The chapter contrasts the glory of the former administration with the greater glory of the Spirit's ministry. Paul is not announcing a gospel that has borrowed a covenantal phrase while leaving his hearers outside the covenant's life. He is ministering the reality established by Christ.

Later he tells them they are the temple of the living God and cites God's promise to dwell in His people (2 Corinthians 6:16). The wording draws upon the covenantal dwelling language of Leviticus 26:11-12 and Ezekiel 37:27. It is more precise to identify those backgrounds than to label the verse simply a direct quotation of Jeremiah.

Paul's application is nevertheless clear. A congregation including Gentiles is addressed as the people in whom God dwells. The prophets' covenantal language is not kept away from them by an uncrossable national boundary.

The first preaching was to Israel

At Pentecost Peter proclaimed that the crucified Jesus is Lord and Christ. His hearers were pricked in their hearts, called to repentance, and promised the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:36-39). The people addressed were not told that their covenant had been transferred elsewhere and that they must await another opening.

The promise reached them, their children, and all afar off whom the Lord would call. In its immediate setting Peter's wording should not be made to supply every detail of the later Gentile mission before the narrative unfolds. But Acts does unfold that mission, and the same gift reaches Cornelius and his household.

Peter explains that God gave the Gentiles the same gift and purified their hearts by faith (Acts 11:15-17; 15:8-9). He then confesses that Jewish believers will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ even as the Gentiles (Acts 15:11). The apostle does not preserve a higher covenantal entrance for himself.

David's restored tabernacle and the nations

At the Jerusalem council James cites Amos concerning the restoration of David's fallen tabernacle and the Gentiles called by God's name (Acts 15:14-18; Amos 9:11-12). His purpose is to show that the reception of the nations agrees with the prophets. He does not require those nations first to become Jews under the Mosaic yoke.

The council's conclusion matters. Gentile inclusion is not treated as an intrusion that the prophetic promise had failed to foresee. James sees agreement between the prophetic word and the work God is doing. The nations are being gathered by the name of the Lord.

The quotation should not be stretched into a claim that Acts 15 exhaustively interprets every detail of Amos or every feature of Davidic restoration. Its explicit application is enough: the present reception of Gentiles belongs to God's prophetic purpose. It is not a covenantal accident between the real promises.

Together with Peter's account of the Spirit and Paul's language of fellowheirs, this makes a sustained apostolic case. The new covenant comes through Israel's Messiah and embraces the nations in His people. It does not erase the promise's first address; it displays the promise's intended reach.

> After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.
>
> — Acts 15:16-17

Shall Israel cease from being a nation?

Jeremiah 31:35-37 must be heard beside the new covenant promise. God invokes the established order of sun, moon, and stars as the measure of His faithfulness. He then declares that Israel will not cease from being a nation before Him and that He will not cast off all its seed for what they have done. These are strong assurances addressed to a historical people facing judgment. We should not reduce them to a general promise that religious people will continue to exist.

> Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.
>
> — Jeremiah 31:35-37

The word nation here concerns Israel as a people; it does not itself specify uninterrupted political sovereignty, one particular constitutional form, or the perpetuity of every Mosaic ordinance. Jeremiah's audience could experience exile and loss of government without proving that God had cast off all Israel. Yet we should not evade the promise by simply replacing its historical referent with a different people. The assurance preserves God's continuing purpose toward Israel, even under deserved judgment.

The neighboring promise identifies a new covenant unlike the covenant made at the exodus. Israel's continuance and the transformation of covenantal administration are therefore compatible within Jeremiah's own chapter. Verses 35-37 cannot require the permanent operation of the very administration verses 31-34 distinguish from the new covenant. Nor should their language of national continuance be reduced to nothing more than an assurance of individual forgiveness. The promises belong together without saying precisely the same thing.

Romans 11 provides the apostolic counterpart: God has not cast away His people; a Jewish remnant lives by grace; natural branches may be received again; and the fathers remain significant to His faithful purpose. This gives us grounds for continuing hope toward Jewish people. It does not make unbelief saving faith or establish another atonement. The distinction is

between God’s enduring purpose for a people and the claim that this purpose requires permanently divided redeemed communities.

Jeremiah’s promise deserves to stand in its full strength. God’s faithfulness is not exhausted by judgment, and Israel’s sin has not defeated His purpose. The new covenant explains how reconciliation is secured; the Messiah remains its mediator. The same Lord who preserves His purpose gathers His people through the forgiveness He has promised.

Promise brings responsibility

The inward law is not permission to live carelessly. The Spirit who gives life also makes obedience possible. The new covenant does not reduce God’s holiness. It brings a people near through the sufficient sacrifice and works within them the life the old administration could command but not perfect.

Therefore the Church should not boast in the phrase *new covenant* while refusing the new covenant’s fruit. Forgiveness calls us into fellowship with God. The written law in the heart calls us into willing obedience. God’s dwelling calls us away from idols and into purity.

This responsibility is shared. Jewish and Gentile believers do not have different standards of holiness based on different access to the Father. Both have one Spirit, one Lord, and one reconciled body.

The new covenant was promised to Israel and Judah. It was established by their Messiah and first proclaimed among them. The nations have been brought near through the same blood, under one mediator, as one people of the new covenant.

8. They Shall Look upon Me

Zechariah speaks of a piercing, a pouring out of grace, and a deep mourning. These words belong to the story of Israel's promised deliverance, and they have become a major text in discussions of future Jewish conversion.

> And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.
>
> — Zechariah 12:10

We should allow the whole sentence to speak. It is not simply a prediction that someone will be physically wounded. It describes a gracious work of God producing recognition and grief. Its personal and covenantal depth should not be reduced to a headline about Jerusalem.

John places the pierced One at the cross

John records the soldier piercing Jesus' side and the coming forth of blood and water. He grounds his testimony in what was seen, then identifies Scripture's witness to the event (John 19:34-37).

> And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.
>
> — John 19:37

The pierced One has now been identified. The prophecy's controlling referent is Jesus Christ crucified. No interpretation can faithfully detach Zechariah's piercing from Him or leave it wholly unidentified until a future political event.

But John's citation does not require us to say that every dimension of Zechariah 12 was exhaustively completed on Good Friday. He identifies the pierced Messiah and the scriptural significance of the cross. The surrounding promise of grace, mourning, cleansing, and deliverance can continue to unfold through the saving work of that same Messiah.

This qualification is essential. An initial or decisive fulfillment establishes the center; it does not always exhaust the scope. We can receive John's

authoritative identification while continuing to ask how the rest of the prophecy reaches its fullness.

Mourning awakened by grace

The prophet's order is gracious. God pours out the spirit of grace and supplications. The people look and mourn. The mourning is not a performance designed to persuade an unwilling God to become merciful. It is the response awakened by His mercy.

At Pentecost Peter proclaimed the crucified Jesus, and his hearers were pricked in their hearts (Acts 2:36-37). Many repented and were baptized in His name. This is a profound correspondence with Zechariah's pattern: Jerusalem hears of the One pierced, hearts are wounded, and repentance answers the proclamation.

Acts 2 does not explicitly quote Zechariah 12:10 as the complete explanation of that event. We should describe the connection as an apostolic-era correspondence and expression of the prophetic pattern rather than pretend Luke makes a formal exhaustive identification. The difference is small in wording but important in method.

The connection still matters. Saving mourning over Christ has already begun among Jewish people. It is not an experience unavailable until an appointed future generation. Every Jewish believer who turns to the crucified Messiah shares the mercy to which the prophecy directs us.

The fountain opened for sin

Zechariah 13:1 follows the mourning with a fountain opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. The answer to guilt is not the preservation of national prestige. It is cleansing.

Christ's blood provides the reality to which Christian readers are directed by the New Testament's teaching of forgiveness and cleansing (Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:7). We need not claim that every use of water imagery in Scripture means exactly the same thing. The larger covenantal movement is clear: the pierced Messiah is the source of reconciliation and purification.

The prophet's grief therefore has a saving goal. It should not be confused with despair that refuses Christ or with a public lament that never turns to Him. Paul distinguishes godly sorrow working repentance from the sorrow of the world working death (2 Corinthians 7:10).

The Lord does not call us to remain forever fascinated by our failure. He brings us through repentance into forgiveness and life. The wound of conviction is healed at the fountain He has opened.

The appearing of the pierced Lord

> Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.
>
> — Revelation 1:7

John again uses the piercing and mourning imagery, now alongside the coming with clouds. The relationship of this verse to first-century judgment and the final appearing has been interpreted differently. This book does not attempt to settle every question of Revelation's chronology through that one sentence.

It does affirm the future visible appearing of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead. The crucified Lord is the risen Lord, and the risen Lord is the One who will appear. His future glory does not diminish the significance of the cross; it manifests the identity and victory of the One who was pierced.

Seeing Him also must not be equated automatically with being saved. Revelation speaks of wailing; Scripture elsewhere teaches that the Lord's appearing brings judgment as well as deliverance. Saving faith is not established merely by unavoidable recognition when His glory is manifest. We are summoned to repent and believe now.

May a future Jewish turning fulfill more of this promise?

Yes, such a turning is compatible with the center already identified by John. If many Jewish people are brought to recognize their Messiah and mourn in repentance, that would magnify the same spirit of grace and the same cleansing. It would not displace the earlier Jewish believers who had already turned to Him.

But the possibility does not establish the rest of a national restoration system. A future fulfillment of mourning cannot make animal offerings another atonement, create a Saviour beside Jesus, or divide His reconciled body. The prophecy's saving force remains Christ-centered.

We should therefore distinguish three claims. The pierced One is certainly Jesus; John identifies Him. Saving repentance has certainly occurred among Jews already. A great further Jewish turning is possible and worthy of prayer, while the precise scope and timing of Zechariah's remaining fulfillment require careful argument.

That distinction gives the reader confidence without artificial certainty. We can keep the cross where John places it and keep the door open where Paul leaves it.

Look and live

The pastoral summons reaches beyond the debate. We can argue about the identity of those who will look while avoiding the question whether we ourselves have looked in faith. Correct prophetic interpretation cannot cleanse a conscience. The pierced Lord can.

Thomas was invited to behold the wounds and believe (John 20:27). The gospel still invites sinners to trust the crucified and risen Son. Jewish or Gentile, religious or irreligious, the need is the same and the mercy is the same.

The prophecy leads us to grace, supplication, repentance, and cleansing. Whatever further fullness God may grant, it will lead to the same pierced Christ.

9. Ye Shall Not See Me Henceforth

Jesus' lament over Jerusalem joins judgment to tenderness. He speaks as the One who would gather the city and as the King whom the city has refused. We should not discuss His final sentence without hearing the sorrow that precedes it.

> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
>
> — Matthew 23:37

> Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.
>
> — Matthew 23:38

> For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
>
> — Matthew 23:39

His words are neither indifference nor flattery. The refusal is real, the judgment is real, and recognition of the King remains decisive.

The desolate house

The house Jerusalem trusted would not shield it from rejecting the Lord of the house. Religious structures cannot guarantee communion with God while His Son is refused. Jesus has already rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for appearances that concealed corruption. The declaration of desolation brings that confrontation to a terrible conclusion.

Matthew 24 continues with the prediction of the temple's destruction. The first-century judgment upon Jerusalem belongs to the historical setting of these words. But the reality of that judgment should not be used to pronounce every Jewish person forever excluded from mercy. The disciples themselves were Jews; many Jerusalem residents would believe the gospel.

Desolation is a judgment on refusal, not proof that God has become incapable of restoring sinners. The same King who judges is the Saviour who receives those who come to Him.

Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled

Luke records another saying readers rightly bring beside Matthew's lament. Jerusalem will suffer conquest, captivity, and Gentile trampling, and that condition is described with an "until" (Luke 21:24).

> And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.
>
> — Luke 21:24

The setting is judgment upon Jerusalem, including the warning to flee when armies surround it (Luke 21:20-23). The limit Jesus names leaves room for an end to that trampling; we should neither erase the limit nor supply a detailed restoration scheme the sentence does not state. It does not identify renewed animal offerings, a restored Mosaic basis of fellowship, or a second redeemed people.

The "times of the Gentiles" here concerns Jerusalem's experience under Gentile domination. The "fulness of the Gentiles" in Romans 11:25 concerns Gentile reception in Paul's account of salvation. The expressions may be related within God's larger purpose, but similar vocabulary does not prove identical reference or establish an exact shared timetable. Both passages must first be heard in their own setting. Any future mercy toward Jerusalem remains mercy under the same Messiah.

The confession comes from Psalm 118

"Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD" appears in Psalm 118:26. The psalm also speaks of the stone rejected by the builders becoming the head of the corner (Psalm 118:22). Jesus applies that rejected stone to Himself in His confrontation with the leaders (Matthew 21:42).

Peter later applies the same language as he stands before the rulers, elders, and scribes in Jerusalem. The rejected stone has become the head of the corner, and salvation is in no other name (Acts 4:11-12). The psalm's hope does not wait upon the discovery of another messianic claimant. The One rejected has been vindicated by God.

This controls the meaning of the welcome Jesus requires. A future confession, if promised, is a confession of Him. A present conversion is recognition of Him. Neither can make the old rejection compatible with saving fellowship.

They had heard the words already

The crowds at the triumphal entry had cried, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 21:9). That event helps us see why repeating a formula is not the whole question. The same city contained genuine disciples, excited crowds, opponents, and leaders preparing to reject Him.

We should not speak as though every person who acclaimed Jesus later denied Him, or every inhabitant of Jerusalem had responded identically. The narratives distinguish people and responses. But they also show that public religious enthusiasm does not settle whether the King is truly received.

Jesus’ lament addresses Jerusalem’s refusal. The required recognition cannot be supplied by mere ceremony. Salvation involves receiving the One whom the words bless.

Does “till” promise a future turning?

The wording can reasonably be read as holding out a future recognition by Jerusalem or the Jewish people represented by the city. Many Christians hear hope in it, and the hope should not be dismissed simply because it has sometimes been joined to an unwarranted timetable.

Other readers emphasize the condition: Jerusalem will not see the Lord in welcome while continuing to refuse Him. They understand the sentence as announcing the necessity of messianic recognition, with that recognition already occurring whenever Jewish people believe.

The strongest treatment acknowledges both the future force some find in the wording and the certainty of the required confession. This book does not need to prove that the verse can have no future corporate scope. It needs to ask what such a scope would establish.

If Jesus promises a future Jewish welcome, that welcome is directed to the same rejected and exalted King. The text does not say that the temple will resume its old atoning function, that Moses’ administration will become the basis of righteousness again, or that Gentile believers must leave the household before Jewish believers enter it.

Luke’s wording and the limits of a timetable

Luke records the lament and the saying in Luke 13:34-35, with the words “until the time come when ye shall say.” The phrasing plainly allows the

reader to think of a coming occasion. It should not be explained away as though time were entirely absent.

Yet identifying a coming occasion is different from identifying every circumstance of that occasion. Neither Luke nor Matthew supplies in this sentence a detailed sequence of national sovereignty, temple rebuilding, and renewed sacrifices. Those proposals must be argued from other passages rather than smuggled into *until*.

What the two accounts make clear is that Jerusalem's future cannot be savingly understood without the Messiah. The welcome of Psalm 118 belongs to the One the builders rejected and God exalted. A future restoration worthy of the name would honor Him.

The same King, the same way of access

Romans 10 identifies the confession that accompanies salvation: confessing the Lord Jesus and believing that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9-13). Paul does not create a Jewish confession with a different saving object. The same Lord is rich to all who call upon Him.

Therefore present Jewish conversion and any future Jewish turning share the same center. We may differ about whether Matthew 23:39 announces a particular corporate event while agreeing that no one sees the King savingly by avoiding Him.

This also tests the Church. We may sing correct words and resist His government. We may bless His name publicly while keeping the life He calls us to surrender. A confession that honors Christ cannot be detached from faith in Christ.

Tenderness without evasion

The Lord's lament prevents a cold conclusion. He would gather; they would not. His judgment does not make His willingness unreal. His tenderness does not make unbelief harmless.

That is the tone we need in speaking of Jerusalem and Jewish people. We should tell the truth about Christ's necessity and speak with the desire that people be gathered under His care. Prophetic confidence without the Saviour's compassion has lost something essential.

The rejected stone is already the corner stone. The welcome remains a welcome of that King. Whatever fuller recognition the future may hold, it cannot move the inheritance away from Him.

10. The Land and the Temple

The land and the temple are the most concrete forms of the restoration question. Israel received a country, a sanctuary, priests, sacrifices, and promises of return after judgment. Ezekiel describes a gathered people, a renewed heart, a Davidic shepherd, a measured house, a healing river, and a city named for God's presence. A reader is entitled to ask what becomes of all these things.

It is not enough to reply that everything is spiritual and leave the details behind. Spiritual reality is not vagueness. The Spirit brings God's purpose to living fulfillment, and Scripture gives us definite testimony concerning that fulfillment. Nor is it enough to place a modern map beside Ezekiel and assume the question has been settled. The prophet must be read through his covenantal setting and the Messiah's apostolic witnesses.

The land was a real gift

Genesis records God's promise to give Abraham's seed the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:7; 15:18-21; 17:8). Abraham journeyed there, and his descendants were brought there after the exodus. The gift was geographical and historical. We should never defend the Messiah's greater inheritance by pretending the first gift was not real.

Joshua also bears witness to God's faithfulness. The Lord gave Israel the land He had sworn to the fathers, and the narrator declares that no good thing He had spoken failed (Joshua 21:43-45). Joshua 23:14 repeats that testimony. These statements must be heard before we say the land promise simply never happened.

They do not settle every later question. Israel still had work to do, enemies to face, covenantal responsibilities to fulfill, and later judgments and returns to experience. A narrative statement of fulfillment can coexist with further development. But it forbids describing the history as though God had provided nothing that counted as keeping His word.

The land was also lived in under covenantal conditions. Moses warned that persistent disobedience would bring exile (Deuteronomy 28:63-68), and the prophets explained the judgments accordingly. God's promise and Israel's responsibility were not enemies. The covenant itself supplied the terms under which the people occupied the gift.

The promise is carried into a greater inheritance

Paul speaks of Abraham as heir of the world through the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:13). This is not the language of an inheritance made smaller than Canaan. It takes the reader toward a scope larger than one territory.

Hebrews describes Abraham living in the promised land as a stranger, looking for the city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:9-10). The patriarchs confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims, desired a better country, and were promised a city prepared by God (Hebrews 11:13-16). Their tents within Canaan pointed beyond the immediate possession.

Jesus promises the earth to the meek (Matthew 5:5), echoing the inheritance language of Psalm 37. Romans 8:19-23 describes creation awaiting deliverance and believers awaiting bodily redemption. Revelation 21:1-3 depicts the new heaven and new earth and God's dwelling with His people.

These passages direct the promise toward a renewed creation under the Messiah. They do not dissolve the earth into an idea. The risen Lord has a real body, His people will be raised, and creation will be delivered. The Christian inheritance is spiritual in source and character without being unreal or merely inward.

The conclusion advanced here is that the territorial gift belongs within a promise whose ultimate fullness is worldwide and new-creational in Christ. We should present that as a conclusion drawn from the whole witness, not pretend that a single verse says in so many words that every geographical question has ended.

Canaan does not become a second saving title

Some readers agree that the inheritance expands while still expecting a particular territorial gift to Jewish believers within the final purpose. That expectation must be distinguished from the claim that unbelieving ancestry possesses a saving covenantal title independent of Christ. The two claims are not identical.

This book's principal objection is to using territory to divide the redeemed into permanently separate covenant peoples or to define God's faithfulness outside the promised Seed. Galatians 3:29 places heirship in belonging to Christ. Ephesians 3:6 describes Gentiles as fellowheirs. Whatever providential distinctions God may maintain, there is no rival basis of saving inheritance.

Questions about a modern state's boundaries, public security, international law, or the civil rights of its citizens require their own moral and political consideration. They cannot be settled by turning an individual's ancestry into an exemption from the gospel. A political judgment and a declaration of covenantal salvation are different kinds of claim.

The Christian does not need to deny the dignity or civil rights of any people to confess that the promised inheritance is held in Christ. Nor does affection for Jewish people require a theory of two redeemed peoples.

The heart belongs to the restoration promise

Ezekiel 36 addresses the house of Israel and promises cleansing, a new heart, a new spirit, God's Spirit within them, and life in the land (Ezekiel 36:22-28). The restoration is for God's holy name, not a reward for an impressive national performance.

> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.
>
> — Ezekiel 36:26

> And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.
>
> — Ezekiel 36:27

The land is not the first gift in this sequence. The heart is. That is a theological observation about the order of these verses, not a claim that verse order alone exhaustively interprets every land promise. Its force is that the prophet binds restoration to cleansing and the inward work of God.

A return that leaves the heart's unbelief entirely untouched cannot, by itself, be the fullness of this prophecy. We cannot point to geography and ignore the Spirit whom the promise places within the restored people. The Lord's purpose is a people who belong to Him and walk in His ways.

The New Testament announces those inward realities now: the Spirit given, hearts purified by faith, law written within, and sins forgiven. Their consummation remains future, but their presence among Christ's people is already real. Ezekiel's promise should not be handled as though the new heart were unrelated to the new covenant's present life.

Dry bones and one shepherd

Ezekiel 37 identifies the dry bones as the whole house of Israel, despairing that its hope is lost (Ezekiel 37:11). The vision speaks into the deathlike condition of exile and promises God's power to restore. Its resurrection imagery is vivid, but its immediate explanation is national restoration; we should not automatically turn every detail into a prediction of individual bodily resurrection.

The chapter then joins Judah and Joseph in the sign of two sticks brought together in one hand. The Lord promises one nation, one king, cleansing, and a covenant of peace (Ezekiel 37:15-28). The division within Israel is healed under the Davidic shepherd.

> And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.
>
> — Ezekiel 37:24

The prophecy's first horizon includes the divided houses of Israel. It should not be rewritten as though the two sticks explicitly meant Jew and Gentile. Yet its movement toward one restored people under one Davidic shepherd is consonant with the greater unity the New Testament announces in the Messiah.

Jesus speaks of other sheep brought into "one fold" under "one shepherd" (John 10:16). Paul speaks of both reconciled in one body. The movement is toward unity under the King, not toward the permanent establishment of separate redeemed communities.

David's throne and the risen King

Peter explains that God's oath concerning David's descendant was directed to Christ and His resurrection (Acts 2:30-31). He then announces the exalted Jesus at God's right hand as Lord and Christ (Acts 2:32-36). The royal promise is inseparable from what God has done in raising and exalting His Son.

Acts 2 does not require us to deny any future manifestation of the kingdom. It requires us to acknowledge the King's present exaltation and the already inaugurated fulfillment of the Davidic promise. The Messiah is not waiting to become Lord after a territorial arrangement is completed.

His enemies have not all been subdued; His reign continues until they are put beneath His feet (1 Corinthians 15:25-28). Present reign and future triumph belong together. A future Jewish turning would recognize the King who already reigns; it would not supply a kingship the resurrection failed to establish.

This matters for Ezekiel. The promised shepherd cannot be interpreted as though Jesus' exaltation had no bearing upon the oracle. Whatever further fulfillment God grants must proceed under the risen Son of David.

Wilt thou restore again the kingdom to Israel?

The disciples themselves asked the restoration question before the ascension. Their question deserves a direct hearing, especially after Acts 1:3 has described Jesus teaching concerning the kingdom of God.

> When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
>
> — Acts 1:6-8

Jesus does not explicitly deny restoration in His answer. We should not report a rebuke the text does not record. He withholds knowledge of the times and seasons and promises the Spirit's power for witness from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Neither the question nor the answer specifies a restored sacrificial order or two permanently separated peoples of God.

The rest of Acts shows how the commission unfolds. Peter proclaims the risen and exalted Son of David in Acts 2; the Spirit falls upon Gentiles in Acts 10; and James recognizes agreement between the reception of the nations and the prophetic word in Acts 15. These events belong to the explanation of the kingdom Jesus announced. They are not an incidental pause in a story whose real center lies elsewhere.

We need not force Acts 1 to settle every future question. The Father retains authority over the times; the Son has been exalted; the Spirit empowers witness; and the nations are summoned to the same Lord. Any remaining restoration must agree with that apostolic unfolding.

The measured house: why the details matter

Ezekiel 40-48 is an extended vision. It gives gates, courts, rooms, measurements, priestly regulations, offerings, land portions, a river, and a city. The prophet receives it after Jerusalem's judgment, and the vision answers the terrible loss of God's dwelling with His people.

A literal future temple reading stresses the precision of the measurements and the concrete ceremonial instructions. Its supporters ask why so many details would be supplied if no building were intended. That is a serious question. We should answer it rather than ridicule the desire to take the prophet's words seriously.

A symbolic or typological reading observes the vision's idealized order, extraordinary river, transformed land, and culmination in God's presence. It reads the sanctuary as a prophetic portrayal of restored holiness and dwelling, whose fullest explanation comes through Christ and the new creation. This is the approach argued here.

Neither the amount of detail nor the presence of symbolism decides the question alone. The tabernacle had exact measurements and still served as a pattern of heavenly things. Revelation gives exact measurements for a city whose character is also the bride. Concrete description can serve theological revelation without being a construction order for our own century.

The decisive controls are the vision's own purpose and the later inspired witness. We must ask what it teaches about God's holiness, the people's access, sacrifice, and dwelling, then read those themes beside Hebrews and Revelation.

A pattern intended to humble and order a people

In Ezekiel 43:10-12 the prophet is told to show the house to Israel so that they may be ashamed of their iniquities. The form and ordinances are related to repentance and the holiness of the house. The vision is therefore not an architectural curiosity detached from moral restoration.

The return of the glory answers the earlier departure of God's glory in Ezekiel 10-11. God again dwells among His people, whose defilement must no longer corrupt His holy place (Ezekiel 43:1-9). The sanctuary's ordered spaces teach the seriousness of divine holiness and the need for a purified people.

Measurements can carry that theological purpose. Boundaries, access, priestly order, and the distinction of holy from profane make visible what an unholy people had violated. We should not assume that accepting such a purpose makes the details disposable. They are part of the revelation of God's ordered dwelling.

But neither should we assume that their only possible truth is reproduction in stone after Christ. The New Testament's living temple is no casual arrangement: it is founded upon the apostles and prophets, has Christ as corner stone, and grows into a holy dwelling by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

The sacrifices cannot be waved away

The most difficult feature for a post-cross temple scheme is not the building's size. It is the sacrificial ministry. Ezekiel describes offerings using the vocabulary of cleansing, reconciliation, and atonement. Ezekiel 43:18-27 concerns the altar's consecration; Ezekiel 45:15-17 speaks of offerings and reconciliation, and verses 18-25 describe purification and festival sacrifices.

A future literal interpretation often explains these offerings as memorials of Christ's finished sacrifice rather than additional means of redemption. That explanation aims to preserve Hebrews' teaching, and it should be represented fairly. Its advocates commonly affirm that animal blood never actually removed sin in the first place.

Yet calling the offerings *memorial* does not finish the exegesis. The word is an explanatory proposal; the reader must still account for the prophet's explicit sacrificial functions and the New Testament's announcement that the former sanctuary ministry has reached its goal. Ezekiel does not simply label this a new commemorative ordinance for Christians after Calvary.

Christ's supper is an appointed remembrance of His death, but its existence does not automatically authorize the reintroduction of the sacrificial administration Hebrews describes as superseded. One memorial established by the Lord cannot be used as proof that every former rite will return.

The distinction between eternal redemption and ceremonial purification is also relevant. Animal blood once served a God-appointed external ministry without perfecting the conscience (Hebrews 9:9-14). That historical fact explains the old order's purpose. It does not, by itself, prove that such an order must be restored after the better covenant has been established.

> And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.
>
> — Ezekiel 45:17

Hebrews supplies a governing limit

Hebrews 7 announces the changed priesthood. Hebrews 8 identifies the better covenant and the old covenant's passing. Hebrews 9 contrasts the former sanctuary and repeated blood with Christ's entry by His own blood. Hebrews 10 declares the sufficiency of His offering and the end of further offerings for sin.

These are explicit apostolic teachings, not incidental metaphors. A reading of Ezekiel must not require their reversal. The prophet's hope cannot culminate in a priestly center that rivals the Son, restricts the access He has opened, or makes repeated offerings necessary to supplement His work.

This does not settle whether human beings could erect a future temple as a matter of history. A building can exist without being God's appointed saving center. The question is theological: must God restore Ezekiel's ceremonial order as a covenantal requirement in order to be faithful? The argument of this book is that His faithfulness reaches its greater expression in the living High Priest, the sufficient sacrifice, and the dwelling He establishes.

To insist on the cubits against the Lamb is to prefer Ezekiel's measuring reed (Ezekiel 40:3) to Christ, the substance to which the shadows point (Colossians 2:17). We should read every cubit attentively while refusing to use it to overturn what God has revealed in His Son.

The sons of Zadok

Ezekiel 44 distinguishes priests who had participated in Israel's defilement from the sons of Zadok who kept the sanctuary's charge. The distinction concerns faithfulness, holiness, and priestly responsibility. It belongs to the prophet's account of a purified order.

We should not simply relabel every Zadokite as an individual Christian and declare the exegesis complete. The historical priestly language has its own

setting. Nor should we assume that a genealogical priesthood thereby becomes the permanent basis of post-cross access to God.

In the New Testament the high priesthood belongs to Jesus, while His people are a holy and royal priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable through Him (1 Peter 2:5, 9). The access is shared by Jewish and Gentile believers. An interpretation that relegates Gentile saints to an outer covenantal rank beneath an ancestral priestly caste would require a division the apostles do not establish.

The Zadokite theme can teach the seriousness of faithful service and holy access without displacing the final priesthood Christ holds. The greater fulfillment is not less holy than the vision's pattern. It is made holy through the Son.

The prince is not a simple portrait of Jesus in every detail

The prince receives a portion, has responsibilities for offerings, and is warned concerning oppression (Ezekiel 45:7-17; 46:16-18). Ezekiel 45:22 even speaks of the prince providing a sin offering for himself and the people. These details must be faced honestly.

They make a simple identification of every action of the prince with the sinless Christ difficult. Jesus does not need an offering for His own sin. A symbolic reading should therefore avoid claiming that each feature is a direct personal prediction of Him. A literal reading must also explain who this prince is and how his sacrificial duties fit the finished work of Christ.

The vision presents righteous administration within the categories available to its priestly setting. Its royal and priestly order points toward restored life under God's government. The Messiah provides the perfect government and priesthood to which that restoration moves, but typological fulfillment does not require every feature of the shadow to be reproduced as a personal characteristic of the Antitype.

Some features are fulfilled by transformation; some expose the limitation of the earlier form when set beside the perfect Son. That is already how Hebrews handles priests who were mortal and needed offerings for themselves (Hebrews 7:23-28). We should let that inspired comparison teach us restraint.

> And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering.
>
> — Ezekiel 45:22

Tribal allotments and the stranger's inheritance

Ezekiel 47:13-23 and chapter 48 describe ordered portions for the tribes, the sanctuary, the city, and the prince. The arrangement portrays an inheritance restored under God's holiness, not one possessed through unchecked private ambition.

A remarkable provision gives the strangers dwelling among Israel an inheritance among the tribes (Ezekiel 47:22-23). We should not equate every feature of this arrangement with the exact membership of the New Testament Church. Yet the passage itself resists an account of restoration whose only impulse is exclusion by bloodline. God's restored order makes provision for those joined to the people's life.

The New Testament takes inclusion farther in the Messiah: Gentiles become fellowcitizens, fellowheirs, and members of the same body. The inheritance is not obtained by taking a tribal label for ourselves. It is received through union with Christ.

The allotments therefore belong within the vision's ordered restoration. They must be read alongside its cleansing and divine presence, then alongside the larger inheritance the apostles announce. A map alone cannot carry the whole covenant.

> And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.
>
> — Ezekiel 47:22-23

The river that brings life

Ezekiel 47 describes water flowing from the house, deepening as it goes, and bringing life where it reaches. Trees bear fruit and their leaves provide medicine (Ezekiel 47:1-12). The river exceeds an ordinary account of temple plumbing. God's dwelling becomes the source of life for the land.

Revelation 22:1-2 draws unmistakably upon this imagery: a river of the water of life proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, and the tree's leaves are for the healing of the nations. The similarity is textual and concrete: river, life, fruit, leaves, and healing. John takes Ezekiel's imagery into his account of the final city.

The source is significant. Life proceeds from God and the Lamb. It does not depend upon the return of an animal altar as an alternative center. The healing reaches the nations, and the servants of God see His face (Revelation 22:3-4).

The New Testament also associates living water with the Spirit given through Jesus (John 7:37-39). That does not mean Ezekiel 47 is exhausted by an inward experience today. It means the life-giving presence of God is already known through the Son and will be fully manifested in the new creation.

Present life and final healing belong together. The river's goal is God's abundant life, not the preservation of distance from Him.

The city: the LORD is there

Ezekiel's final word is the city's name: "The LORD is there" (Ezekiel 48:35). That is the heart of the vision. Judgment had exposed the loss of holy fellowship; restoration culminates in God's presence.

Revelation 21 brings this theme to fullness. God's tabernacle is with men; He dwells with them; they are His people (Revelation 21:3). The city bears the names of Israel's tribes and the apostles of the Lamb (Revelation 21:12-14). The imagery honors the unity of the biblical history rather than giving the reader two final redeemed cities with separate covenantal centers.

> And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.
>
> — Revelation 21:22

The absence of a separate temple is not the absence of God's dwelling. It is the fullness of His presence. What the sanctuary signified has become the city's whole reality. The Lamb is not placed beside a restored sacrificial center; He is the temple with God Almighty.

That final vision provides a strong governing direction for reading Ezekiel. The prophetic movement reaches the unmediated fullness of God's presence through the Lamb. A temple building may belong to various historical

expectations, but it cannot be made the ultimate measure of promise when John explicitly describes a consummation without it.

> For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
>
> — Galatians 4:25-26

The living house now

Ephesians 2:21-22 speaks of believers being built into a holy temple and God's habitation through the Spirit. First Corinthians 3:16 tells the congregation it is God's temple. First Peter 2:4-5 describes living stones built into a spiritual house.

These are present realities, not merely names borrowed for encouragement. They carry responsibility: a dwelling for the holy God must not be defiled. The Church is not free to call herself a temple while treating division, immorality, and idolatry as harmless.

At the center stands Christ, whose body Jesus identifies with the temple in John 2:19-21. The dwelling begins with Him; those joined to Him share its life. We should say that Christ fulfills the sanctuary promise and His people participate in Him, rather than making the Church an independent substitute that takes His place.

That emphasis also keeps the future open in the right way. We await the full unveiling of the dwelling already inaugurated in Him. We await resurrection and the city where death is no more. We do not await the discovery that access through the Son was only a temporary arrangement.

Further restoration passages

Zechariah 14:16-21 raises important questions concerning the nations, the feast of tabernacles, and sacrifice. Its imagery requires a sustained treatment alongside the whole chapter. That exposition lies beyond this volume's scope; the passage has not been overlooked. The governing question remains how its worship and holiness language relates to Christ's finished sacrifice and the nations' approach to God through Him.

Isaiah 66:20-23 likewise joins the nations' gathering with priestly and festival language. Hosea 3:4-5 moves from Israel's deprivation toward seeking the Lord and David their king. Deuteronomy 30:1-6 unites return

with the circumcision of the heart, while Isaiah 11:11-12 places regathering beside the reign of Jesse's promised descendant. These passages should be read individually rather than treated as interchangeable predictions of a single modern event.

Their historical settings matter, as do their particular promises. Their Christian exposition must also account for the promised King, inward renewal, the inclusion of the nations, and the priesthood revealed in the New Testament. The apostolic pattern supplies those governing truths without giving us permission to pretend that every prophetic detail has already been explained.

What this chapter affirms, and what it leaves open

The land was genuinely given. The prophets genuinely promised restoration. The Abrahamic inheritance is held in Christ and reaches toward the world and the new creation. Ezekiel's heart, shepherd, dwelling, river, and city must be read in relation to the fulfillment the apostles reveal.

The chapter argues for a typological and Christ-centered reading of Ezekiel's temple vision. It does not claim that every measurement has been individually decoded or that every difficult feature has an uncontested explanation. The prince's sin offering and the detailed ritual instructions remain important tests for any interpretation. A responsible reading names those difficulties and brings them under the clear teaching of the new covenant rather than concealing them.

What cannot be surrendered is the finality of Christ's offering, the perfection of His priesthood, and the shared access of His people. A future Jewish ingathering can honor all three. A revival of covenantal separation or an atoning center beside the Lamb cannot.

What the chapter holds together is one heart renewed by the Spirit, one Davidic King who reigns, one dwelling whose life is in the Lamb, and one inheritance brought to fullness in Him.

The Door Is Still Open

An argument about Israel can end with a closed fist or an open heart. Paul gives us the proper ending. He grieves for his kinsmen, prays for their salvation, warns the Gentiles against boasting, and worships the God whose mercy exceeds his understanding.

> Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.
>
> — Romans 10:1

This prayer is not an embarrassment to fulfillment in Christ. It is one of its necessary fruits. If the promised Seed has come and the covenant's mercy is available, we should desire that Israel's descendants receive Him. The natural branches' reception would be a joy, not a threat to the Church's inheritance.

No triumph over people

The victory of Christ does not authorize triumph over Jewish people. He conquered sin and death to save sinners. A Gentile believer who treats Israel's unbelief as an occasion for contempt has forgotten both the root that bears him and the mercy that received him.

Nor should the book leave us contemptuous toward Christians who read these passages differently. Some inherited a prophetic framework without ever being taught to examine its premises. Some are trying, with sincere concern, to defend the truthfulness of God. Their sincerity does not settle the exegesis, but it should shape our manner of speaking.

We can be firm without caricature. We can insist that the apostles govern our reading of the prophets and still welcome honest questions. We can reject a divided inheritance without treating every person who expects a future Jewish turning as though he rejected the gospel.

The aim is to bring the reader nearer to Christ and His word. If the controversy becomes more important to us than that aim, we have lost the reason for writing.

No postponement of the gospel

The door is open now. Paul did not wait for a future national event before seeking Jewish salvation. He preached, reasoned, prayed, and hoped to save some of his own flesh. We should follow his urgency.

The same is true for Gentiles. We cannot spend our lives studying somebody else's future while refusing the Lord's present call to us. The question is not merely what Israel will someday confess. It is whether we confess the risen Lord, trust His blood, and walk in His life today.

Faith is not agreement with the best prophetic diagram but reliance upon Christ, and repentance is not joining the correct side of a debate but turning to Him from unbelief and sin. The Spirit gives more than information: He brings us into the living fellowship of the Son.

The Church should display the inheritance she confesses

One people should live as one people. We cannot defend the one new man while cultivating racial pride, cultural superiority, or denominational hostility. We cannot announce a new heart while protecting the hardness of the old one.

The unity Christ made is to be kept in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3-6). It has practical substance: bearing with one another, speaking truth, forgiving, sharing burdens, and serving through love. The household of God is meant to show what His reconciled people look like.

This life does not make the gospel true; the gospel makes this life possible. But our conduct can obscure the truth we profess. Jewish people should not encounter a Church that claims their Messiah while despising their humanity. Gentile believers should not encounter an inner circle that grants them inferior access. The blood has brought both near.

A hope as large as God's mercy

We need not fear a future Jewish fullness. If God grants it, we will rejoice that the natural branches have returned to their own tree. If He gathers through many smaller acts across the generations, each act will magnify the same mercy. Our confidence rests in His ability, and our responsibility is faithfulness to the gospel He has entrusted to us.

We also await a greater consummation than any present conversion movement. The Lord will appear, the dead will be raised, death will be destroyed, and God will dwell with His people in the renewed creation. This hope is shared by all who belong to Christ. It does not divide the household into rival destinations.

The title can therefore be spoken with a clear conscience: God is not done with Israel. He has not forgotten the fathers, retracted the promise, or abandoned the people who receive His mercy. He has given the promised Seed and opened the saving covenant through His blood.

> I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
>
> — John 10:9

The door is still wide open, but the Door is Christ (John 10:9).

Glossary

Abrahamic promise. God's promise to Abraham concerning seed, blessing, and inheritance. Paul distinguishes it from the law given later and identifies its decisive fulfillment in Christ, in whom believers become heirs (Galatians 3:16-29).

All Israel. The phrase in Romans 11:26. Principal readings identify the whole redeemed people in Christ, the complete company of saved Jews across the gospel age, or a substantial future Jewish turning. All must be tested within Paul's teaching of faith, mercy, and the one olive tree.

Antitype. The greater reality to which a God-appointed type points. Christ is the substance of the shadows; fulfillment can transform a type's form rather than reproduce every feature unchanged.

Apostolic interpretation. The inspired explanation of the Scriptures given by Christ's authorized witnesses in the New Testament. It governs the Christian understanding of the prophets rather than functioning as an optional later commentary.

Christian Zionism. Christian belief that the Jewish people's restoration to the land and, in many forms, the modern state of Israel have continuing theological significance within biblical prophecy; its adherents differ concerning salvation, politics, and future worship.

Church. The assembly belonging to Jesus Christ. It includes Jewish and Gentile believers reconciled in one body, not an exclusively Gentile organization established to compete with Israel.

Consummation. The final completion of God's purpose already inaugurated in Christ, including His appearing, bodily resurrection, final judgment, and the new creation.

Covenant. A divinely established relationship with promises and obligations. Scripture records several covenants; their distinctions must be respected while their saving purpose is understood in relation to Christ.

Davidic promise. God's royal promise concerning David and his descendant. Acts 2 connects it with Jesus' resurrection and exaltation. The Messiah's present reign moves toward the final subjection of His enemies.

Dispensationalism. A family of theological systems characteristically maintaining a continuing distinction between Israel and the Church and expecting a particular national future for Israel. Its forms differ; a fair critique must not assume every adherent teaches two ways of salvation.

Election. God's gracious choosing and calling. In Romans 9-11 it explains His faithful purpose and the remnant, excludes merit, and belongs alongside the summons to faith and the promise of mercy.

Ethnic Israel. The Jewish people identified through descent and historical relation to the fathers. Paul can use *Israel* in this sense while distinguishing those who receive the saving promise. The term does not itself establish an individual's salvation.

Everlasting. Enduring covenantal language that must be read within its setting and inspired exposition. It cannot, by itself, prove that every associated ceremonial or territorial form continues unchanged after Christ.

Fulfillment. The bringing of God's promise to its appointed reality. It honors the historical gift and reaches its greater purpose in Christ. Fulfillment can be inaugurated before its final consummation.

Gentile fullness. The "fulness of the Gentiles" in Romans 11:25. It concerns the completed Gentile reception in God's purpose; it does not require the salvation of every Gentile individual.

Graffed in. The KJV expression for insertion of a branch into the olive tree. In Romans 11 wild and natural branches share one tree; the natural branches' return is tied to leaving unbelief.

Israel of God. The expression in Galatians 6:16. It is read either as the whole renewed people or particularly as Jewish believers within that people. The new creation rule governs the blessing under either reading.

Justification. God's reception of the believer as righteous through faith in Christ, apart from the works of the law. Neither ancestry nor religious performance supplies an alternative basis.

Melchisedec. The priest-king of Salem in Genesis 14 whose order, expounded in Hebrews 7, provides the scriptural pattern for Christ's enduring priesthood.

Mosaic covenant. The covenant made with Israel after the exodus, including the law and sanctuary administration. Hebrews distinguishes it

from the new covenant and declares the former administration obsolete in relation to Christ's perfected ministry.

Mystery. A truth in God's purpose now disclosed through apostolic revelation. In Romans 11 it concerns partial Jewish hardening, Gentile fullness, and Israel's salvation; in Ephesians 3 it includes Gentiles as fellowheirs in the same body.

New covenant. The covenant promised to Israel and Judah in Jeremiah 31, established through Christ's blood, and ministered by the apostles. Its blessings include inward law, knowledge of God, forgiveness, and His indwelling presence.

New creation. The renewed life belonging to those in Christ, with its final fullness in the renewed creation. In Galatians 6 it is the rule that excludes boasting in circumcision or uncircumcision.

One new man. Ephesians 2:15's description of the unity Christ makes from Jew and Gentile. It concerns shared reconciliation, access, household, and inheritance without requiring the erasure of personal history.

Remnant. Those preserved by God's grace amid wider unbelief. Romans 11's present Jewish remnant disproves total rejection; it neither creates a superior caste nor limits God's ability to bring further Jewish reception.

Replacement theology. A contested label. If it means that an exclusively Gentile institution displaced Jews and annulled God's promises, this book rejects it. The book argues that Christ fulfills the promises and joins Jews and Gentiles in His people.

Root. In Romans 11, the sustaining foundation of the good olive tree, most naturally related to the fathers and God's promises fulfilled in Christ. Paul does not explicitly define it as a modern state or an independent Gentile Church.

Seed. Biblical language for offspring. Galatians 3 identifies Christ as the promised Seed and those belonging to Him as Abraham's seed and heirs. Paul's argument is Christological, not a denial that the word can be collective.

Shadow and substance. A God-appointed anticipatory form and the reality to which it points. Colossians 2:17 identifies the body as Christ. Shadows are honored by receiving their substance.

Spiritual. Belonging to or produced by the Holy Spirit. It does not mean imaginary or necessarily immaterial; the promised resurrection is bodily, and the inheritance includes the renewed creation.

Temple. God's appointed dwelling. The New Testament identifies Christ's body, His gathered people, and finally God and the Lamb as the living reality of the dwelling, while treating the former sanctuary as anticipatory.

Typology. Reading the historical persons, events, and institutions God appointed in relation to their later fulfillment. It must be governed by Scripture and must not become uncontrolled allegory assigning invented meanings to every detail.

Zadokites. The sons of Zadok distinguished in Ezekiel 44 for faithful sanctuary service and given priestly responsibilities in the restoration vision.

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About the Author

Rick Simoni writes for The Overcomer Magazine, encouraging believers to see the unity of the Scriptures in Jesus Christ and to live in the reality of His finished work, present reign, and indwelling life. His writing emphasizes the movement from shadow to substance, the fellowship of Christ's body, and the obedience that grows from faith.

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