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Why is Israel special? by Bar Nissim



The answer is simple. The Scripture teaches us that God Himself created and chose the Jewish people to be His ambassadors and ‘priests’ to the world:

May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham” (Genesis 28:3-4).

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites” (Exodus 19:5-7).

God then gave the Jewish people a specific Land as a national homeland, and an entire set of ordinances to govern how the people lived. Israel is the only nation to ever receive such a set of governing instructions directly from the hand of God Himself.

“The LORD showed him (Moses) the whole land—from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. Then the LORD said to him, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ (Deuteronomy 34:1-4, NIV).

“You must obey my instructions and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and instructions, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD” (Leviticus 18:4-5).

“Keep all my decrees and all my instructions and follow them. I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:37).

There is no time limit given to this choice or to the promises inherent therein. In fact, the Messiah himself said, **“...until heaven and earth pass away, not one ‘yud’ (the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet), and not even one decorative marking on a letter will lose its validity” (Matthew 5: 18).** Since the heavens and earth have not ceased to exist, the Jewish people are still

greatly loved by God, and have a very special calling and task in His plans to redeem mankind. If it could be otherwise, then Messiah's words in Matthew 5 would be untrue.

God's relationship to the Jewish people throughout history, including people in the state of Israel today, is summed up by the following verses:

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me” (Isaiah 49:15-16, NIV).

Those of you who are mothers know that you could never forget that you had a baby! That baby is in your consciousness all of the time. And although God doesn't need to engrave or tattoo a reminder to love Israel on His 'hand', this is written for your and my benefit that He has done so. Why? Because humans understand that if you brand something or tattoo a message into your skin, that this message is always there to remind you of something. So are Israel and the Jewish people continually in the consciousness of God.

Today there is a lot of pressure on the Netherlands to divorce themselves from the modern nation of Israel (the world's only Jewish state). Palestinian hate propaganda constantly tries to portray Israel as a place of hatred, cruelty and genocide against Palestinians. Nothing could be further from the truth. (I lived in Israel for over 20 years, so I hope that I can be considered knowledgeable in such things). Certainly there are deep troubles in Israeli-Palestinian relations. However, Israel has *many* more human rights in her society than any other Arab state has (including the Palestinian Authority areas, i.e. the Gaza strip and parts of Judea and Samaria). In those areas that are governed by the Palestinian Authority, Palestinians are not free to speak, nor is dissent of any type allowed. Freedom of religion and freedom of speech, rights cherished by Dutch citizens, are also cherished by Israelis. These two rights do not exist in any Arab nations that I am aware of. Lebanon may have had freedom of religion until the recent PLO, then Hizbullah, invasions of that nation that have forced a fundamentalist style of Islam upon the population, and have replaced democracy with fascism. Those who do not follow this type of thought and lifestyle are treated as a lower status of people (this includes the entire Lebanese Christian community that is fighting to simply exist and to possess basic human rights). Anyhow, modern day politics will attempt to dissuade the USA from its historic support of Israel.

This is also occurring in the churches, where there is much erroneous teaching that the church has inherited all of the promises that God gave to Israel. This theological idea has opened the door for all types of misunderstanding and for anti-Semitism to grow in the USA. This is most unfortunate, since the Scripture means for believers to love, pray for and support the Jewish people worldwide.

Instead of replacing Israel, the biblically correct teaching is that all believers in Yeshua (Jesus) join Israel to a good degree. That is, believing in the Jewish Messiah makes one a part of Israel's purpose in the world. You believe in Israel's God, you worship Him and Him alone; you read the Jewish Bible (all books of the Bible, including the Newer Testament, were written by Jewish authors, with Job perhaps the only exception). Scholars in our day and age are writing that even Luke of the Newer Testament was probably a convert to Judaism, or a 'God-fearer', which placed him solidly into the Jewish community of his time. Paul described the Jewish-Gentile relationship as follows:

If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you...do not be arrogant (Romans 11:17-18, 20, NIV).

So, instead of replacing Israel, you are “nourished” by Israel’s “sap”, that is, you are sustained and taught by the history, commandments, songs, wisdom, morals, and beliefs that are taught in the Bible. This does not divorce you from the Jewish people! It should, by all means, put you into solidarity with God’s purposes for Israel and the Jewish people. This truth gives you a positive and hopefully loving relationship with the Jewish people. If God is a loving mother to Israel (*cf. Isaiah 49*), then all believers should relate to Israel as an older brother. To think that God has made you separate, better or more loved and a replacement for Israel because of belief in the Jewish Messiah is illogical! This is the very ‘arrogance’ that Paul says not to have in verse 20. Such a belief robs non-Jewish believers of their rich inheritance and background to your faith that only Israel and its legacy can provide.

And to put it bluntly, everyone owes a debt of gratitude to Jewish men and women who shed their blood in history in order to preserve the scriptures against pagan forces who tried to destroy all belief in the One True God. One example of this was during the Hasmonean Era, about 160 years before Yeshua (Jesus) was born. Thousands of Jewish men, women and children were butchered by Hellenist forces because they refused to give up belief in One God, and they hid their scrolls of the Bible to preserve them. This led to the Maccabean Wars, and to the holiday of Hanukkah, when Jewish forces recaptured the city of Jerusalem and the Temple from pagans, in order to worship the True God there once again. Courageous Messianic Jews (Jews who believed in Yeshua) opened up the world for spreading the news about the Jewish Messiah’s coming, so that non-Jews could also believe in the Jewish Messiah. They gave of themselves for you and your ancestors.

Search the scriptures and look at all the promises given to the Jewish people. You will often see the word ‘forever’ (the Hebrew word ‘*le’olam*’) or the phrase ‘throughout the generations’ (the Hebrew ‘*me’dor le’dor*’) used in relation to God’s promises. This underscores the certainty of God’s promises to Israel being fulfilled, including the ones to bring the Messiah back to Jerusalem in the future (*cf. Zechariah 12:10 and 14:4*).

“For all of God’s promises are certain through the Messiah...” (1 Corinthians 1:20a). For those of you who are believers in Yeshua (Jesus), it is he who makes sure that God’s promises will be fulfilled, and that the Jewish people will still be alive and around (according to the scriptures, in Israel) to share in the blessings of his return to earth. Till then, please *pray for*, support and love the nation of Israel and Jewish communities worldwide.

Thank you!