

## **RESURRECTION OF NATIONAL ISRAEL**

The prophet Ezekiel foretold a special resurrection after the return of Jesus Christ that will only include the twelve tribes of national Israel.

But why resurrect these dead Israelites in a special resurrection and reestablish their nation on earth? What possible purpose could God have for a physical nation of Israelites after the return of Jesus Christ? Believe it or not the twelve tribes of Israel play a prominent roll in the events after the return of Jesus Christ they are destined to have a major impact the lives of billions of people.

In order to understand why there will be a special resurrection for national Israel, it is important to review some of the promises that God made to Abraham and the Israelites.

In Genesis chapter 22, verses 17 and 18 we read this:

The Creator God said to Abraham, "In blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your Seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed as a reward in that you have obeyed my voice" (Gen.22:17-18 Para.).

God's promise to Abraham not only assured him multitudes of descendants but also that all the inhabitants of the world would be blessed through these descendants.

### **A Promise to National Israel**

After God delivered the descendants of Jacob from slavery in Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai, he offered to make a covenant with them, and said to them:

"Now if you will surely pay attention to my covenant, you shall become a special treasure to me above all the nations, for all the earth is mine. And you shall become a kingdom of priests for me, a holy nation. These are the words which you shall

speak to the sons of Israel. And Moses came and called the elders of the people. And he put all these words before them which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, All which the Lord has spoken we will do. And Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord" (Ex.19:5-8 Para.).

In Deuteronomy 28:1-13, God promised wealth, protection, health, happiness, and many other fantastic blessings to the Israelites for their obedience.

If the Israelites had performed their part of this covenant, God would not only have granted them enormous physical blessings but also spiritual salvation.

### **The Promise of Life**

Immortality and eternal life were also offered to those who lived under the Old Covenant. But in order to obtain it, they had to fulfill the conditions of the covenant. Those who obeyed God deserved life because they kept their covenant agreement with him. A partial list of those who gained salvation under a covenant relationship with God is given in chapter eleven of the Book of Hebrews.

To the Israelites the Creator God said:

"You shall keep my statutes, and my judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord" (Lev.18:5 KJV). See also Job 14:14-15; 1.Thes.4:13-15; Heb.11:33-40.

We know from history and the scriptures that national Israel failed to keep their part of the covenant, so God canceled the agreement with them by giving them a bill of divorcement through the written word of the prophets. See Isa.50:1; Jer.3:8-9.

Although national Israel failed to fulfill their agreement with God, they still had an opportunity for national greatness and salvation because of God's unconditional promise to Abraham. Because of these prior commitments to the patriarchs (2.Chron.6:14; Psa.89:34; Zech.2:10-12), God will

continue to work with Israel until his purpose for mankind is completed:

Moses told the Israelites:

"You are a holy people to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be his own treasure out of all the people upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love on you or choose you because you were more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But because the Lord loved you, and because he kept the oath which he swore to your fathers, the Lord has caused you to go out with a strong hand, and redeemed you from the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Because of this, know that the Lord your God, is God, and who is a faithful God, keeps the covenant and mercy with those who love him, and with those who keep his commands, to a thousand generations" (Deut.7:6-9 Para.).

A thousand generations is over 20,000 years. Why would the Creator God promise to make a covenant that extended over 20,000 years with the Israelites, unless he had a plan for their nation that extended far into the future past the second advent of the Messiah?

### **God Has Not Forsaken Israel**

In his letter to the elect at Rome, the apostle Paul clearly explains that God has not forsaken Israel, but he has only set them aside for a short time in order to give the Gentiles an opportunity to have some of the promises given to national Israel.

Romans chapter 11, beginning in verse 1 (Paraphrased)

"I say then, Did God thrust away his people? Let it not be! For I am also an Israelite, out of Abraham's seed, of the tribe of Benjamin. God did not thrust away his people whom he foreknew. Or did you not know what the scripture said in Elijah, how he pleaded with God against Israel, Saying, 'Lord, they killed the prophets, and they took down your alters; and only I am left; and they seek my soul.' But what does the Divine answer say to him, 'I reserved to

myself seven thousand men who did not bow the knee to Baal'. So then, also in this present time a remnant according to election of grace has come into being, But if by grace, no longer is it of works; else grace no longer becomes grace. But if of works, it is no longer grace; else work is no longer work" (vs.1-6).

The terms and conditions of salvation through the Covenant with Israel included stipulations for the performance of physical works for justification before God, but this all changed when Jesus became the supreme sacrifice for the sins of mankind. After his sacrifice, works could no longer secure salvation, because salvation had become a gift of grace under the New Covenant.

Continuing in verse 7:

"What then? What Israel seeks, this he did not obtain, but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened; even as it has been written, 'God gave to them a spirit of slumber, eyes not seeing and ears not hearing' until this day" (vs.7-8). See 2.Cor.3:13-18; 4:1-4.

Paul says that the majority of Israel obtained neither the blessings promised to Abraham nor salvation. However, those specifically selected by God (the election: Gr. 'ekloge') for salvation did obtain it (See verses 2-5), but the rest had become unresponsive to God. Therefore, they became unable to understand the way to salvation. See Mk.3:5; Rom.2:5; Ezk.3:7.

Continuing in verse 11:

"I say then, Did not they stumble that they fall? Let it not be! But by their slipping away came salvation to the nations, to provoke them to jealousy. But if their slipping away is the riches of the world, and their default the riches of the nations, how much more their fullness? For I speak to you, the nations [that is, the non-Israelitish nations], since I am the apostle of the nations. . . I glorify my ministry, if somehow I may provoke to jealousy my flesh, and may save some of them. For if their casting away is the reconciliation of the world, what is their reception, except life from the

dead?" (vs.11-15).

Paul further explains that national Israel's opportunity for national greatness and salvation is still a part of God's plan for humanity:

Continuing in verse 16:

"Now if the first-fruits is holy, so also the lump. And if the root is holy, also the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you being a wild olive tree were grafted in among them, and become a sharer of the root and the fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, it is not you that bears the root, but the root bears you. You will then say, the branches were broken off that I might be grafted in" (vs.16-19).

Israel was the nation God chose to begin his redemptive work to the world and to be a righteous example of God's way of life that others could follow. Although Israel failed to be this example, they are still the nation that God will use after the return of Christ to be an example for humanity: See Deut.30:1-6; Isa.44:21; 51:2-3; 52:1-11; Jer.31:35-38; 32:36-42; 33:1-26.

Continuing in verse 20:

"Well for unbelief they were broken off, And you stand by faith. Do not be high minded, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, lest he will not spare you either. Behold, then, the kindness and severity. But on you, kindness—if you continue in the kindness. Otherwise you will also be cut off. And those also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in. For God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the natural wild olive tree, and were against nature grafted into a good olive tree, how much more these being according to nature will be grafted into their own olive tree?" (vs.20-24).

The English word 'unbelief' in verse 20 is the Greek word 'apistia', which means 'unfaithfulness.' Israel was not temporarily set aside because they did not believe what God said; they were set aside because they were not obedient to his law and the covenant

that they had made with him. See Hos.4:6; Joe.2:19-20; Psa.78:10, 36-37; Jer.18:15-17; Rom.1:21-22.

Everyone who has a covenant with God should take heed to honor their agreement and remain faithful to their word, or God will reject them as he did Israel.

Continuing in verse 25:

"For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers—so that you may not be wise within yourselves—that hardness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations comes in; and all Israel will be saved, even as it has been written, "The deliverer will come out of Zion, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins" (vs.25-27).

#### A New Agreement Promised

Because national Israel had great difficulty in obeying God and broke their initial agreement, which they had made with him at Mount Sinai, God promised that he would someday make a new agreement with them, and that this new agreement would be much easier for them to keep because it would have much better terms and conditions.

#### The Covenant People

When reviewing the new covenant that God has promised Israel, it is important to remember that it is the contract made at Mount Sinai that is spoken of. It is this contract with the nation of Israel that will be revised and codified.

#### Jeremiah 31:31-33 Paraphrased

The prophet Jeremiah recorded this concerning God's promise to make a new covenant with national Israel:

"Behold the days come, says the Lord, that I will cut a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I cut with their fathers in the day I took them

by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—which covenant of mine they broke, although I was a husband to them, says the Lord" (vs.31-32).

The people with whom God made the original contract are all dead along with millions of their descendants who died without a new covenant. Israel of the original covenant is not a nation in the promised land today; its descendants are scattered throughout the nations of the earth, which was prophesied by the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. However, because the majority of the Israelites who have ever lived are dead, when will God make this new contract with them and their descendants?

There is no doubt that God has promised to again offer salvation to Israelites on a national and individual basis and to make a new agreement with them. It is also clear from scripture that the first agreement with national Israel has been canceled, and that Jesus Christ has initiated the process whereby a new agreement will be formed with them:

The first agreement that God made with national Israel at Mount Sinai was canceled on the Passover in 30 A.D. with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The events surrounding this Passover and the death and resurrection of the Redeemer of humanity ratified a new agreement with Israel and the rest of humanity. In this same year, on the Festival of Pentecost, many of the various terms, conditions, and promises of the new agreement went into effect for all those called to salvation during the gospel age.

The writer to the Hebrews said this about the new and old covenants with national Israel:

"By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear" (Heb.8:13 NIV).

The Creator God said:

"But this shall be the covenant that I will cut with the house of Israel: After those days, declares the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and

I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (v33).

Notice that the new contract will be made "after those days." The phrase "after those days" refers to a period of time after Christ returns as a conquering king. Before Christ's return, Israel, as a nation under the direction of God, does not exist, because most of the descendants of ancient Israel are scattered throughout the nations of the world.

## **THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES**

Ezekiel chapter 37 contains the prophecy of the valley of dry bones, which pertains to racial Israelites who have died throughout the ages. These Israelites will be resurrected to physical life some time after the return of Christ in order to have their opportunity for salvation under the New Covenant:

Beginning in verse 1 of Ezekiel chapter 37:

"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry." And he said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O lord God, you know. Again he said to me, prophesy upon these bones, and say to them, O you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord" (vs.1-6 KJV).

These people will not be given a spirit body like those who participate in the first resurrection and who will be made spirit-beings at Christ's return (see 1.Cor.15:42-5); these people will be brought back to life as physical human beings (made of flesh and blood). See also Ezk.37:11 below.

Continuing in verse 8:

"And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he to me, Prophecy to the wind, prophecy son of man, and say to the wind, thus says the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (vs.8-10 KJV).

This prophecy pictures millions of humans who will be brought back to physical life in this great valley. God says these people are from the whole house of Israel—that is, the combined houses of Israel and Judah:

Continuing in verse 11:

"Then he said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, our hope is lost: we are cut off from our parts" (v11 KJV).

Verse 11 shows that these people who will be resurrected are the whole house of Israel, which also includes the House of Judah. It is apparent that these are the millions of Israelites who have died over the centuries. They all died without hope because they did not have a covenant with God for salvation.

The prophet Jeremiah tells us the reason for national Israel punishment and scattering among the nations:

"And the Lord says, because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, and have not walked in it; but have walked after the stubbornness of their own heart, and after Baals, which their fathers taught them; so the Lord of host, the God of Israel, says this: Behold, I will feed them, this people with wormwood, and make them to drink water of poison. I will scatter them among the nations which they have not known. . ." (Jer.9:13-16 Para.). See also Jer.18:15-17; Ezk.12:1-15; Rev.8:10-11.

"Therefore prophecy and say to them, Thus says the Lord God; Behold O my people, I will open

your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel" (vs.12-13 KJV).

God speaks to the Israelites as a nation and as specific individuals when he says that he will bring them back to physical life. He calls them "my people"—a phrase that he only uses for the covenant people.

Jeremiah's prophecy describes a people who do not know the God who brought their nation into existence and formed a covenant with them and their ancestors. The only logical reason that these Israelites who will be resurrected do not know God, is that, they have either forgotten who he is or have never known who he is.

In order to understand why God said they will know him, some of what the Bible records about Israel before, during, and after Christ's first coming must be reviewed.

## **BEFORE CHRIST**

The following two biblical records show that national Israel as a whole had forgotten God long before Jesus came as the Messiah:

Deuteronomy chapter 32, beginning in verse 16 says the following:

"With strange gods they moved him to jealousy; and with idols they provoked him to anger. They sacrificed to demons who were not God, to gods whom they did not know, new ones who came lately; your fathers had not dreaded them. You forgot the Rock that brought you into being; and neglected God who formed you. And the Lord looked and despised because of the provocation of his sons and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, sons in whom is no faithfulness" (Deut.32:16-20 KJV Para.).

Jeremiah chapter 2, verses 31 and 32 says:

"O generation, see the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of darkness? Why do my people say, We roam; we will come no more to You. Can a virgin forget her finery, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jer.2:31-32 Para.). See also Jer.3:21; 13:25; 18:15-17; 23:23-27; Ezk.22:12.

While questioning Jesus concerning who he was, the Pharisees asked him.

Where is your father? Jesus answered, You neither know me nor my Father. If you had known me, then you also would have known my Father. . . . Jesus also answered them, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me, whom you say is your God. And you have not known him; but I know him, and if I say that I do not know him, I shall be like you, a liar. But I know him, and keep his word" (Jn.8:19,54-55 Para ).

The Jews who lived in Jesus' time did not know God the Father nor did they recognize Jesus who was the Creator God. Here, we find a people devoid of the knowledge of God the Father and his Son, the Creator and Covenant God of Israel.

The history of Israel from its inception through its division into the ten tribes of the House of Israel and the House of Judah shows a rebellious people who do not have knowledge and faith of the true God. Since the time of Christ to this very day the majority of national Israel who are scattered throughout the nations still do not know their God.

But, there will come a day when the dead of Israel shall rise and know who God is and they will know what great blessings he has in store for them.

Both the prophets Hosea and Isaiah spoke of the great resurrection when the dead of Israel will be brought forth from their graves and have their opportunity for salvation:

Hosea chapter 13, beginning in verse 9:

"O Israel, you are destroyed, but your help is in me. Where is your king? Where is any other who may save you in all your cities? And where are your judges of whom you said, Give to me a king and rulers? I give to you a king in my anger, and take him away in my fury. The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hidden. The pains of a woman in travail shall come to him; he is not a wise son; for he cannot stand still in the time of the breaking forth of sons. I will ransom them from the hand of Sheol; I will redeem them from death. O death where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your ruin? Repentance is hidden from my eyes" (Hos.13:9-14 Para.).

The prophet Hosea was inspired to speak of Israel—past, present, and future—and its destruction for national and personal sins. He spoke of the future when the elect of God will come forth to rule the earth and the dead will be brought out of their graves to an opportunity of redemption through Christ.

Isaiah chapter 32, beginning in verse 13::

"Thorns and briers shall spring upon the land of my people; even over all the houses of joy in the jubilant city, because the place is forsaken; mound and tower are instead of caves, until forever, a joy of wild asses; pasture for flocks; until the spirit is poured out on us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field; and the fruitful field is reckoned as a forest. Then justice shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness shall dwell in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the service of righteousness shall be quietness and hope forever. And my people shall live in a peaceful home, and in safe dwellings, and in secure resting places" (Isa.32:13-18 Para.).

Isaiah chapter 45, verse 17:

"Israel is to be saved in the Lord with everlasting salvation. You shall not be ashamed nor disgraced to the forever of eternity" (Isa.45:17 Para.).

These scriptures show that God will resurrect the rebellious of Israel from their graves to give them an opportunity for salvation.

In Ezekiel's prophecy we see that the hundreds of millions of Israelites who have died over the centuries are to be resurrected back to a physical life:

Ezekiel chapter 37, verse 14:

"And I shall put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then you shall know that I the Lord have spoken and performed it, says the lord" (Ezk.37:14 Para).

This scripture shows that God will place the spirit of life that belongs to him (See Ecc.12:7; Ezk.18:4; Num.27:16) back into the physical bodies of these Israelites. The spirit that is placed in these bodies is the spirit of man (Jms.2:26), not the spirit of God, which makes one a spiritual son of God. The spirit of God is only given when a person believes God, repents of sin, and is baptized. These people obviously did not make these kinds of decisions in their first life, because if they had, they would not be included in this resurrection.

When the Creator God promised: "And I shall place you in your own land . . ." (Ezk.37:14 Para).

He meant that these millions of Israelites will be resurrected into the land that God originally gave to ancient Israel.

The land promised to Abraham lies between the Nile and Euphrates rivers. A very conservative estimate would allow a minimum of well over a million square miles of territory for this vast multitude to occupy. See Gen.13:14-17; 15:18; Ex.23:31; Deut.11:24; Ezk.chps. 47; 48.

There will be no doubt in any of these Israelite's minds who God is when they are resurrected and placed in the promised land; not just because they have been resurrected but also because Christ and The Sovereign Father's earthly children who participated in the first resurrection will be there to help them learn the ways of God.

## **Is all of Israel to be Saved?**

Romans chapter 11, verse 26 says this:

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom.11:26 Para.).

There are very few that understand what Paul said in reference to Israel being saved, However, if one puts aside all preconceived ideas, then Paul's meaning becomes clear:

Because Paul said that, "all Israel shall be saved", many who believe a doctrine of predestination think that all Israel shall be saved regardless of their behavior. What Paul said surely seems to prove their point; however, with a small amount of research, it becomes apparent that this scripture does not say this at all.

Some Bible scholars say the Greek word 'pas', which is translated as 'all' in English, could also mean that not all of Israel will be saved, but the majority as a whole will be saved. However, the true meaning of this scripture is found in the original Greek translation.

The following is the correct translation of what Paul said, "So all Israel shall be saved according as it has been written . . ."

The key to understanding what Paul said, are the words, "as it has been written", which refer to how God says we can obtain salvation. The intent of what Paul said, is not that all Israel will be saved, but that the Israelites must all individually accept Christ as their savior in order to be saved

The overall plan of God for salvation has not changed from the foundation of the world. Part of this plan is that humans must come into conformity with his laws for physical and spiritual behavior. A fundamental teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments, is that, an individual must stop breaking the laws and precepts of God and obey him before he can bless that individual.

## The Promise to the Apostles

On two different occasions Jesus promised that the twelve disciples would rule on the earth with him:

Peter said to Jesus, "Look, we have left all things and followed you. What then shall happen to us? And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, You who have followed me; in the regeneration, when the Son of man sits on his throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt.19:27-28 Para.).

Jesus also told his disciples:

"You are those having continued with me in my trails. And I appoint a kingdom to you, as my Father appointed to me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk.22:28-30 Para.).

## SUMMARY

The resurrection of National Israel will occur after the return of Christ and the resurrection of the elect of God (Rev.20:4-6). And after the Israelites who live through the great tribulation are brought to Palestine to reestablish the nation of Israel (Ezk.36:24-28).

In this time of peace and prosperity, all the dead of Israel will be raised out of the dust of the earth to meet their God and be taught his laws and ways, which lead to salvation and eternal life in the Family and Kingdom of God.

The Creator God said of this time:

"And they shall no longer each man teach his neighbor, and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord. For they shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest of them, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more" (Jer.31:34 Para.). See also Heb.8:7-10.

When Christ returns, he will fulfill the promise he made to ancient Israel when he was their covenant

God, and Israel will again have an opportunity for national greatness, and an opportunity for salvation under the New Covenant:

Ezekiel chapter 37, beginning in verse 14, gives this promise:

"And my Servant David shall be king over them. And there shall be one Shepherd to all of them. And they shall walk in my judgments, and keep my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell on the land that I have given to my servant, to Jacob, there where your fathers dwelt in it. And they shall dwell on it, they and their sons, and the sons of their sons, forever. And my Servant David shall be a ruler to them forever. And I will cut a covenant of peace, and everlasting covenant it shall be with them, and multiply. And I will put my sanctuary in their midst forever. And my Tabernacle shall be with them. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I, the Lord, sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in their midst forever" (Ezk.37:24-28).

King David and King Solomon said the following about God's faithfulness in keeping his agreements and promises:

David said, "He will ever be mindful of his covenant" (Psa.111:5 Para.).

Solomon said, "O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keeps covenant, and shows mercy to your servants, that walk before you with all their hearts" (2.Chron.6:14 Para.).

I see that my time is up, but if you want to know more about the prophecies concerning the 12 tribes of Israel and the impact that they are destined to have on future world events or more about the other subjects that I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell for Bible Research .org.

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