

# The Uniqueness of Israel - Part 2

by Derek Prince

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*God is intervening in the affairs of the Jewish people to redeem the glory of His name and to restore them to their rightful place as His people.*

**Duration:** 37:30

**Scripture:** Isaiah 60:12, Ezekiel 36:22-23, Ezekiel 36:26-28, Matthew 1:1, Matthew 24:14, Romans 11:25

**Topics:** "Israel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the ultimate goal of God's plan for His people: to dwell in the land and be in a covenant relationship with Him. The speaker uses the analogy of a sculptor working on a sculpture to illustrate that God is still working on His people and they should not be criticized. The sermon also highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit in enabling believers to obey God's commandments. The speaker addresses the misconception that the Jews will only return to the land after acknowledging Jesus as their Messiah, stating that this is not God's thought.

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## Transcript

So God says, in the same place where I pronounce my judgment, I will restore my blessing. So they have to be back in the land before that can be fulfilled, you see. There's another sort of practical reason I understand.

And I think it's very important for us in this particular culture to recognize it. We have become in America and in other Western nations excessively individualistic. It's me, my, my family, my God, my church, my gifts, my ministry.

You know, I read a statistic which astonished me that the average number of persons in an American household a day is 1.7 persons. Not even two people can live together any longer. That is the fruit of individualism.

And one of the errors of Protestantism, when carried to extremes, is the excessive emphasis on the individual, which is not biblical. I think of the situation in Philippi after the earthquake. When Paul and Silas had been released by an earthquake.

I just love that thought, you know. God sending an earthquake to get people out of prison. I mean, I don't want to be in prison.

But if I were in prison, it would be exciting to be released by an earthquake. Anyhow, the jailer jumps in, he's about to commit suicide. Because under Roman law, if his prisoners escaped, his life would answer for them.

So, thinking the prisoners had escaped, he said, I might as well end it now. And Paul, what grace. I mean, this man had not been unusually kind to Paul.

Paul said, don't. We're all here. You don't have to kill yourself.

He wasn't concerned about his own situation. He was concerned about the soul of the jailer. And confronted by that kind of love, the jailer said, What must I do to be saved? Now, his was a very individual question.

What must I do to be saved? But the answer that Paul gave him was, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And you will be saved, and it didn't end there. And your household.

God's salvation is intended to be a household salvation. It's not just for individuals. It's for groups.

It's for families. It's for people who are related. And one of the things that God has always emphasized in His dealing with the Jewish people is, they are a people.

God relates to them, not just as individuals, but as a people. God entered into a covenant with them at Sinai, by which they collectively became His people. And by that covenant, they were also related to one another.

The same covenant that established a vertical relationship with the Lord, established a horizontal relationship. And that's, brothers and sisters, that's how it should be in the church. But returning to Israel, God is going to restore that vertical and horizontal relationship.

As a matter of fact, God's covenant, I believe, is the reason why after nineteen centuries of dispersal among more than one hundred nations, the Jews still retain their distinctive identity and relationship. My first wife was Danish and a lover of the Jews. She used to say quite often to me, If you scattered the Danes among all the nations and returned two hundred years later, you wouldn't find a single Dane anywhere.

They would have all been assimilated. And here are the Jewish people who have been scattered for nineteen centuries under tremendous pressure to give up their identity. And they're still a distinct nation.

That's God's doing and it is the outworking of a covenant relationship. And it has a message for the church. Because with the church also, God established a covenant which was vertical and horizontal.

So in order to complete His dealings, God has to bring the Jewish people back into a place where He can deal with them collectively, not just as individuals. And the only logical and scriptural place for that is the land that He gave to them. So, this is not just a whim of God.

It's the logical outworking of His covenant commitment to them. Now, I did touch briefly, if I remember rightly, on Ezekiel chapter 36 yesterday evening. But I want to go back to that chapter because of all the prophecies of Israel's restoration.

I think Ezekiel chapter 36 is the most specific, line by line, incident by incident prediction. So we'll go to Ezekiel 36, and I don't have time to fill in the background. We begin at verse 16, and I want to take you quickly through the remainder of the chapter.

Ezekiel 36, 16. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land... Whose land? Their own land. They defiled it by their own ways and deeds.

And then going on. Therefore I poured out my fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land and for their idols with which they had defiled it. Notice, while they were in it, it was their own land.

But God says they were so rebellious and disobedient and unfaithful that I had to bring judgment upon them. And then He describes the judgment. Verse 19.

So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries. I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. The dispersion of the Jewish people was a judgment of God.

You'll find, if you talk to Jewish people, that's a fact that they're very unwilling to acknowledge. In fact, most people today, whether they're Jews or non-Jews, don't like to talk about the judgment of God. We've got a picture of God as a kind, elderly person who just pats people on the head and says, there, there, never mind.

That is not a correct picture. God is a judge. And He does judge, and ultimately He will judge every single human being.

But His dealings with Israel in many ways are a pattern worked out in history of the principles on which He deals with us as individuals. Then God says, going on in Ezekiel, verse 20. When they came to the nations, goyim, non-Jewish, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name.

When they said of them, these are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of His land. God says, I hope you'll not think me anti-Semitic. He says, I was embarrassed by their behavior.

Everywhere they came, they brought dishonor in My name, because they didn't represent me as I really am. And then, now here is the motive for God's intervention. Very important to understand.

God is not intervening because Israel have deserved it. If He had to wait for that, He'd wait forever. He's intervening to redeem the glory of His name.

So verse 21. But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned amongst the nations, goyim, wherever they went. Therefore, verse 22.

Say to the house of Israel, thus says the Lord God, I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake which you have profaned among the nations, wherever you went. It couldn't be plainer. It's not because you've deserved it.

It's because I want to redeem the glory of My holy name. And I want to say, I spoke last night about parallel restoration. Israel and the church.

Exactly the same is true of God's visitation of the church. It's not because the church has deserved it. We have deserved it no more than Israel.

But God is determined to restore the glory of His name. Going on in verse 23. I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations.

Sanctify means restore the holiness of. It's a tragic fact. But the name of God, the name of Jesus and the name of Christ, in contemporary culture are normally used as swear words.

There is something to redeem. I will sanctify My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when I am hallowed or sanctified in you before us.

What God does is not only for the sake of Israel. It's to reveal His true nature and His principles to all nations. He's chosen to demonstrate it in one nation.

Verse 24. Now we come to the process which God says will take place. And now it is step by step.

I think we can more or less put our finger on the verse, which is as far as we've come. Verse 24. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

Whose land? See, it's their own land whether they're in it or not. Whether they're in it or not doesn't affect the ownership of the land. It's theirs because God gave it to them by an everlasting covenant.

He didn't lend it to them. He gave it to them. But He expected them to behave appropriately.

So, I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. The Jewish people that are regathered today in Israel have come from at least 100 different nations. So God is doing very exactly what He said.

Ruth and I attended the Hebrew University for a language course in 1979 in Jerusalem. And I reckon that amongst the students who were with me, there were people who had returned from 30 different nations in one class. I mean, it's breathtaking.

People cheat themselves out of so much when they don't see the magnitude of what God is doing. It's awe inspiring, at least to me. Verse 25, Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean.

I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Notice that they are to return in what God calls filthiness. It's very important to see that.

Because a lot of Christians have taught, Yes, the Jews will return. But only after they've acknowledged Jesus as their Messiah. That's a nice thought, but it isn't God's thought.

God says, I'm going to bring them back first, then I'm going to deal with them there. And I explained what I believe is a logical reason. And I want to say that the present spiritual condition of the Jewish people in Israel is filthiness.

I think as many babies have been aborted in Israel as perished in the whole of the Holocaust. That's just simply one fact. Israel is absolutely swamped with the occult.

And let me say this, the Orthodox Jews, most of them, not all of them, are as deep in the occult as anybody. I used to think at a distance they were very pious, holy people. They're not.

They regularly make pilgrimages to the tombs of dead rabbis to worship them. I don't know whether, I think I will say this. God help me.

Recently Ruth and I had a new Russian immigrant who had just come from Russia, working for us. It's a typical example of what God does. He was an atheist, he wasn't interested.

He didn't know why he had come to Israel. But he wanted to see the sites. So he wandered around the old city and ended up in the church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Now if there's one place that to me is idolatrous and unclean it's the church of the Holy Sepulcher. But he sat there and God revealed to him Jesus is the Messiah. And he was so weak by the revelation he couldn't get up and walk for forty minutes.

Then he staggered outside and sat down again. But he knew that Jesus is the Messiah. He came and worked for us for a while.

And he was living at that time in the old city. And he said, I just think that I need to sing this. He said there's a brothel just next door to where I live.

And he said every night the young Orthodox men line up at the brothel. You know why? Because Scripture says that during a woman's period a man must not have intercourse. And the rabbis, some of them, have actually endorsed the practice by which a man may during that period go to a prostitute.

I don't want to be negative, but I just want to say if it talks about filthiness. Filthiness is what it is. God brought them back like that.

You and I wouldn't have done it. But if I'd been me I would never have saved me. I certainly didn't deserve it.

And I was filthy. So let's not withhold from Israel the same kind of grace that God has shown to us. He is sovereign in His grace.

That's a word that's dropped out of the vocabulary of most Christians. The sovereignty of God. My definition of sovereignty is this.

God does what He wants, when He wants, the way He wants and He asks no one's permission. And so I bow before the sovereignty of God. I read the Scriptures and I say if God says that that's what He's going to do.

And I don't try to straighten God out. So God says I'll sprinkle clean water upon you and cleanse you from all your filthiness. Now it's interesting, what is the clean water? For me, I think it means the Word of God.

Because Jesus said to His disciples, You are clean through the Word which I've spoken. And more and more the Jewish people in Israel are being exposed to the Word of God including the Greek Hadashah, the New Testament. And it has a startling effect.

I think of one young man who's a friend of both Ruth and me. He was a typical American secular Jew. He didn't have any kind of religious faith.

But somehow or other, somebody gave him a New Testament. And he started to read the obvious place, Matthew's Gospel. And he said after I'd read a few chapters I realized that Jesus really was a Jew.

And then of all the amazing things for the Holy Spirit to do He got to the place where it describes the crucifixion of Jesus. And it says over the cross, this is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. And he realized it's true.

And those words revealed Jesus to him. Today he's a firm, dedicated believer living in Israel. So I have endless confidence in the power of the Word of God.

That was how I came to know the Lord. I started to read the Bible as a secular philosopher, treating it as a work of philosophy. After nine months I encountered the author.

And that made the book meaningful. And from that day to this I have never doubted that the Bible is the true inspired Word of God. I've never struggled for faith.

Thank God. That's the grace of the Lord. The Lord doesn't do the same for everybody.

And then I was in the army at the time. So I thought, well what am I going to do? And I thought, let me start a Bible class. And I said, where do I begin? And I said, well let's skip the Old Testament and start with the New.

So we'll start with Matthew chapter 1, verse 1. And I held a Bible class actually in the deserts of North Africa. And then later on I held a Bible class for my fellow soldiers in the Sudan. But one thing I learned.

If you expose people to the Word of God and they start to open their minds to it, something is going to happen. I have total confidence in the Word of God. It never will return to envoys.

It will accomplish what He pleases and prosper in the thing for which He sent it. So, I believe the sprinkling of clean water is the exposure of the returned Jewish people to the Scriptures. And then it says in verse 26, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.

I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. So up to that time they had a heart of stone. Now if I'd said that, I would have been called anti-Semitic.

But it was Ezekiel, so don't blame me. But the fact of the matter is, there was a change of heart predicted. What is true of the heart of stone is, it cannot respond to the Holy Spirit.

And I believe for many, many centuries the Jewish people as a whole, with exceptions, were incapable of responding to the Holy Spirit. This is one of the mysteries of God. God did it.

But now He says, I'm going to take away the heart of stone and give you back a heart of flesh. What's the difference? A heart of flesh can respond to the Holy Spirit. And then He says in the next verse, verse 27, I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Notice there's a change. The previous verse was a heart of flesh and a new spirit. Now God says, I will put My Spirit, the Holy Spirit, within you and then you will keep My commandments.

How many of you recognize that apart from the Holy Spirit none of us can obey God, Jew or Gentile. We can try, we can be religious, we can be earnest, we can be self-righteous, but apart from the Holy Spirit we cannot keep God's commandments. And so here's God's dealings.

First of all, take out the heart of stone, restore the heart of flesh and then put My Spirit in them and they will become once again obedient. Now we come to verse 28 which is the goal, the climax. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers.

Again, there is no doubt about what land that is. You shall be My people and I will be your God. That's the goal.

Everything else are steps along the way. If you watched a man maybe making a sculpture out of wood or stone and he was halfway through the process, you'd say, I don't see much in that. There's a lot of lumps sticking out where they shouldn't be sticking out.

I don't see any beauty in it. The sculptor would say, wait till I finish. Then judge my work.

And God says, don't criticize the Jewish people now. Don't criticize Me. Wait till I'm finished.

Because when I'm finished, He says, you will dwell in the land. You will be My people and I will be your God. That's the goal.

Everything else are just stages on the way to that. And then God goes on to speak about blessings of prosperity in the land which we will not go into. Then He says in verse 31, Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good.

And you will loathe or despise yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abomination. At last, the Jewish people will come face to face with all their wrongdoing. With all the ways they've failed God and failed to keep their covenant and failed to live up to their calling.

That will be true repentance. And you know, there's only one person who can give repentance. That's the Holy Spirit.

But when it comes, brothers and sisters, don't turn it down. This is important. Because I believe myself that God is striving with the church in America to bring us to a place of repentance.

Everything that I've said about Israel has a corresponding application to the church. We need it as much as they do. Basically, we are as far away from being what we ought to be as we see them.

We come back to this parallel restoration. But my theme today is Israel, not the church. Then God says in verse 32, Not for your sake do I do this, says the Lord God.

Let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Again, God emphasizes, don't think you've deserved it.

You haven't. I'm doing it because I'm good, because I'm faithful, because I'm gracious, because I keep my covenant promises. Then we'll skip a few verses and we'll go down to the last verse but one.

Thus says the Lord God, I will also be inquired of by the house of Israel to do this for them. There's a remarkable illustration of the balance between God's predestination and man's free will. God says, I'm

going to do all this, you don't deserve it.

I'm going to do it because I've decided to do it. But He says there'll come a point where I will require you to respond to what I'm doing. I will require you to pray a prayer that asks me to do what I've committed myself to do.

You see, the best kind of prayer is the prayer that David prayed. In that same seventeenth chapter of 1 Chronicles, when God revealed that He had a plan for David and his house. He said, Lord, do as you have said.

When you pray that prayer, you're unshakable. It isn't really so important to decide what we want God to do. What's important is to decide what God wants to do.

And then ask Him to do it. See, again, God's dealings with Israel are a pattern of His dealings with us as individuals. Now, just two points to close.

Romans 9, 27 and 28. God is dealing with Israel as a nation. And He has said, and we'll turn to that in a moment, that all Israel will be saved.

But, the all Israel that will be saved is the remnant that God has chosen. Again, we come back to God's sovereignty. And so, in Romans 9, 27, Paul quotes Isaiah.

Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved. The remnant. The specific number of those whom God has chosen.

They will be saved. See, again we're confronted with God's sovereignty. And I see your faces looking a little puzzled.

But let me tell you this. You're not a Christian because you chose Christ. You're a Christian because Christ chose you.

If He had never chosen you, you could never have chosen Him. The initiative is with God, not with man. But I want to say that when God says all Israel will be saved, the all Israel that will be saved will be the remnant whom God has chosen.

Probably there are at least a dozen places in the Scriptures where the word remnant is specifically applied to Israel. The remaining number that God has chosen. And then finally, one further Scripture to close with.

Romans 11, 25 and 26. And remember that Romans 9, 10 and 11 all deal with God's purpose for Israel. Romans 11, 25 and 26.

For I do not desire brethren, and he's writing to Gentiles, that you should be ignorant of this mystery. Alas, the majority of Gentile Christians today are abysmally ignorant of the mystery. Lest you should be wise in your own opinion, which is a very dangerous thing.

The book of Proverbs says do not be wise in your own eye. Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your inward parts and strength to your bones.

Do not be wise in your own eye. It's contrary to the fear of the Lord. For I do not desire brethren that you should be ignorant of this mystery.

Lest you should be wise in your own opinion. That hardening in part has happened to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. Notice two phrases, in part and until.

The Jewish people have never at any time been totally alienated from Israel. There has always been a divine remnant. At some times it was a small remnant.

And every time the Bible speaks about God's judgments on Israel, the next word is always until. It always emphasizes it is not permanent. So blindness or hardness in part has happened to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

And so, all Israel will be saved. But all Israel will be the remnant that God has for now. But it's very important to understand that God has an order.

And He's going to bring in the full number of the Gentiles appointed for salvation before the final consummation of the salvation of Israel. So, if you were a missionary to Africa or South America, winning Gentiles to the Lord, whether you know it or not, you're hastening the salvation of Israel. That's encouraging news, isn't it? Because the full number of the Gentiles has to come in before the complete salvation of Israel.

Ruth and I are committed to two Scriptures in our ministry. The first one is Matthew 24, 14. This gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.

What is the distinctive sign of the close of the age? The proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to all nations. The other Scripture is this. When the full number of the Gentiles has come in, all Israel will be saved.

That's God's divine pattern and order. Okay. Turn, if you will, to Isaiah chapter 60 and verse 12.

This is so important I don't want to omit it. These words are addressed to Zion, which is God's covenant people, especially Israel. In Isaiah 60, verse 12, the Lord says, For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined.

It's important that we all recognize that. No matter what nationality we belong to, God requires every nation to submit themselves to God's plan for Israel. He says, if you don't, I'll require it of you.

You see, I was born into the British Empire when it was the largest empire that history had ever seen. I was born in India, which was called the brightest jewel in the imperial British crown. And I have seen the British Empire disintegrate and cease to be.

Now I'm not saying that's a disaster, but I'll tell you when it happened. Britain emerged victorious from two world wars. But in 1948, the British administration deliberately set itself in a crafty and underhand way to oppose the birth of the state of Israel.

Now I was living in Israel, I'm British, I had been in the British Army. I'm qualified to speak. And from that moment, the British Empire fell apart and Britain declined to the role of a second-rate world power.

Now why do I say that in America? Because today the American government is in grave danger of making precisely the same error. My friend Lance Lambert, who lives in Israel, said early in 1992 because of the policy that the American administration was following He said, the American administration is on a

collision course with Almighty God. The American administration, represented by George Bush and James Baker.

And I've met many Americans who are puzzled at their election results in November of last year. The answer is very simple. The administration collided with Almighty God.

No one can do that and survive. Now I believe there are many other interests that are close to God's heart. The fight against abortion and others.

But if space in the Bible is an indication of the importance of the thing that has in God's sight then the restoration of Israel is priority number one. It takes precedence over all others. A lot of people don't like that.

That's their problem. God is going to do it. I've lived through this as a Britisher.

I saw my own nation make the mistake, I saw the results. Thank God I'm happy today because I'm not committed to an earthly kingdom. My whole family were what you would call empire builders, without exception.

But I'm not building the British empire. I'm building the kingdom of God. And everybody who's a Christian has to decide at some point whether you are a nationalist or a patriot.

Because a patriot puts the kingdom of God before his own and his national interests. A nationalist puts the interests of his nation before the kingdom of God. If you want a startling example of the tragedy of nationalism just look at Germany in the 1930s and 1940s.

There were many wonderful born-again German Christians. There was a history of the gospel. But, I would say 90% of them were nationalists before they were Christians.

And so, because they thought Hitler had the answer for Germany they embraced him as their choice representative. The results are written in history. So let us, dear brothers and sisters, and especially my dear American brothers and sisters, take heed, listen when you can.

Pray for your government that it will not make the same tragic mistake as Britain made. May God bless you. 5-6

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