

What Does the Bible Say About the Future of Israel?



This is a transcription of a YouTube video from Steve Gregg entitled, "*The Dangers of Dispensationalism*." Because not many Christians know the meaning of "dispensationalism" (even though they are under its influence) I used the first words of the talk for the title of this article. The video is one hour and 46 minutes long. I transcribed the first 30 minutes which basically has the message of the title of this article.

I felt inspired to post this because one of my email friends in America, Annie, says that she's in hot water with her Christian friends for not supporting Israel in its war in Gaza. It's sad indeed that so many American Christians today have been influenced by false doctrines of Darby's and Scofield's dispensationalism. Bible teacher Dr. Gene Kim calls dispensationalism "rightly dividing the Word of truth." I call it propagating the lies of the Devil.

The emphasis in the text are mine.

Transcription

All right, we're going to continue to talk about what does the Bible say about the future of Israel? Now, one thing we saw was the Bible really doesn't have any unconditional promises to anyone. There are times when the promise is made without, on that occasion, mentioning the condition, but God doesn't fail to mention the conditions on other occasions. He has said, there's a general policy I have. **If I make promises to you and you break them, I'll break the promises.** So that's why it's so irresponsible for people to say, "Well, if God doesn't keep his promises to Israel now, he's an unfaithful God." Well, wait, He did keep his promises to Israel as long as He could, and they cast them off.

Now, by the way, they did inherit the land. That did happen in the days of Joshua. And he did make Abraham a great nation and the father of many nations. So, I mean, these are things that God did for them. He fulfilled those promises, but **in order for them to continue in perpetuity, they had to behave. They had to be faithful.** They had to keep the covenant because **the whole basis for their existence as a nation was a covenant.**

And as I was saying, **the nation of Israel today has no such covenant.** There are more atheist Jews in Israel than there are Jewish Jews who practice Judaism. The number of atheists, fortunately, has gone down. Right now,

atheists in Israel, the atheist Jews, are only about 20% now, but there's less than that of observant Jews who practice Judaism. But that number of atheists is down. Back in, I think, 2015, the number was 65%. So it's really plummeted, but unfortunately, those who have ceased to be atheists have not ended up in the church, or if they did, the church was mighty small beforehand because there are still hardly any Christians who are among the Jews in Israel. That's just the statistics. You can go to Google, look at many websites, look up government websites, whatever, Israel's websites, and yeah, I'm not making this up. This is what you'll find. I've looked at many, just to make sure that I was vetting my information properly.

Now, what else does the Bible say about Israel that might have something to do with the future? Well, I'm remembering now the things I was taught and that I repeated when I was a dispensationalist. One of those is that the Bible teaches there will be continual conflict between Isaac and Ishmael. Now the Jewish people, of course, descended from Isaac through Jacob, and it is thought that most of the Arabs, or many of them, descended from Ishmael.

I say it is thought because no one really has kept a complete record of this, but it's generally believed that many Arabs, many Arab peoples descended from Ishmael, and I'll accept that for the time being. So is there to be inevitably constant hatred and fighting between Israel and the Arabs because of this thing about Isaac and Ishmael? Well, where do we read, first of all, about this continual conflict between Ishmael and Isaac? I remember the first time I asked myself that question because I always had said, "Oh, the Bible says that the descendants of Ishmael, they're going to be fighting against the descents of Isaac, and that's just the way it's going to be to the end." Yeah, except there's nothing in the Bible that says any part of that.

The verse they use, and there's only one, is in Genesis chapter 16 in verse 12. This is spoken to Hagar about her son Ishmael, and God is telling her that even though he's been rejected from being the chosen heir of Abraham's line to bring the Messiah into the world, he's not going to do that, but that he's going to be blessed too. God's going to bless Ishmael as well, and he makes this statement about him.

He says, "Ishmael shall be a wild man. His hand shall be against every man and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Now, that same, he'll dwell in the presence of all his brethren. Some people prefer to say he'll dwell in antagonism with all his brethren. Maybe, I mean, I don't know if that's true or not. I'm not a Hebrew scholar. It doesn't matter to me which way it reads. The point is that he's a wild man and he'll be hostile toward all other people. That doesn't speak specifically of hostility toward the Jews, though the Jews are other people, so I guess that would include them, but this is a statement about Ishmael, talking about what kind of man he's going to be.

There's not the slightest hint that all the descendants of Ishmael are going to be like him, and this is something that I think Americans often mistake, and I think it's because, I hate to say it, because I don't think this is consciously true, we think of people as ethnic identities. Now, I'm not of the view that this is a white supremacist nation or anything like that.

That's not my position. My position is when we say, "Well, Jesus was a Jew, the apostles were Jews. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, and these heroes of ours, the prophets, they were Jews. So the Jews are good." Well, that's a non-sequitur. Whatever your ancestors may have been, doesn't tell us anything about what you are, and Ezekiel 18 specifically says, a righteous father's righteousness will not be imputed to his unrighteous son, or an unrighteous father, his unrighteousness will not be imputed to his righteous son. There's no suggestion that if you have a good father or a bad father, that this somehow stamps your offering, even in the next generation, much less hundreds of generations, there's not the slightest hint of this in the Bible.

Now, have the Arabs always been hostile toward the Jews? I don't know. We don't see a lot of evidence of it in the Bible. There are times when the Edomites, and times when the Ishmaelites, and time when the Midianites, all of which were descended from Abraham, by the way, when they did attack Israel in the period of the Judges, you know, these different pagan nations that were not the chosen people, they made war with them. That included Ishmaelites, but not particularly the Ishmaelites, not more than these others, there's no particular hostility between Ishmaelites and Jews more than generic antisemitism that exists in many pagan nations.

And really, real problems between the Jews and the Arabs began largely when Jews started moving in large numbers from Europe, especially into Palestine. This was before Israel became a nation. They were moving in there for decades before it became a nation. And largely the Arabs and the Jews, many of them lived peaceably with each other.

In fact, I was listening to a YouTube the other day of an Orthodox rabbi. You may have seen it. Long bearded, orthodox, orthodox clothes. He was on an Al Jazeera interview, a Muslim woman was interviewing him, and he was saying, unbeknownst to Americans, Orthodox Jews don't believe in Zionism. **They don't believe in the state of Israel because they believe that God said Israel has to repent first.** And since Israel has *not* repented, they do not see this as a fulfillment of prophecy.

Now, I'm not sure if there are some Orthodox Jews that would contest that. I don't know what every Orthodox Jew thinks, but he said there are tens of thousands of Orthodox Jews that that's their way of seeing it. And he said he weeps for the Palestinians because of the injustice he's done and that he's anti-Israel, not anti-Jew. He's not antisemitic any more than Paul or Moses were when they decried what the Jews did. But he's anti-the-state of Israel because he knows things about it that many Americans don't. I know some of them cause I've studied them in recent years more, but many Christians have no idea. And therefore Palestinians tend to be targeted or not, not as much now, but I think now too, yeah, definitely.

It happens now, just a couple of years ago, a Palestinian journalist, a woman, was shot by Israeli troops. And the next day when the Palestinians were carrying her coffin to her funeral, the Israeli troops came in and tried to bust it up because they didn't like what she wrote. This is not a free country in all the respects that we think of a free country.

It's true. Israel has been much more, I believe, open to the Arabs in their borders than we would have expected them to be. There are even Arabs on the Knesset. But there's still harassment. If a Jewish (? I think he meant to say Palestinian) boy throws a rock at an Israeli tank, and there's a notable case of this, he, his sister, and his parents are all put in jail. And, you know, it's like the whole family's punished because he threw a rock at a tank.

Now, was that tank endangered by a rock being thrown at it? No, they just were angry because he was hostile toward them. So they punished this whole family and took his home. This happens. This is not so long ago. Now, I do believe that we only hear about the injustices done by the other side. And there, and there may be more injustices done by the other side.

Certainly, in this recent conflict, the other side, I think, is inexcusable. I mean, punishing, killing civilians, babies, women, and so forth. I mean, there's no question that Hamas doesn't necessarily have the interest of the Palestinians at heart. Hamas is Palestinian in ethnicity, and Palestinians did vote Hamas into power, probably at, you know, gunpoint, but many people in Hamas or in Palestine are suffering. And **many of them are Christians. I think I mentioned 7% of the Palestinians are Christians.** That's *14 times* the percentage of Jews that are Christians in Israel. If you meet a Christian in Israel who lives there, the chances are 14 times greater that that person is going to be an Arab than that he's going to be a Jew. Now, I mean, that should give us some perspective. We're not talking here about a righteous, godly nation.

Now, this hostility between Ishmael and Isaac, there's nothing in the Bible that says this is continual. It's a statement about the man, Ishmael. It describes what kind of a man he was. There are no predictions that his offspring will or will not be that way.

We might say, well, there's been some cases where it seems like the Arabs are a lot like that. Yeah, there are cases when the Jews were like that. There are cases like when Americans were like that toward the Indians. And there are certainly cases when the Indians were like that toward the European settlers. I mean, there's been a lot of bad behavior to go around. There are no people who are always good.

But to say there's a special hostility decreed by God, which requires us to take a stand against the Arabs because they're from Ishmael and God predicted they'd be against Isaac and we're on their side because that's God's people. That's fabricated from whole cloth. There's not a single scripture that would say that.

Now let's talk about the restoration from the exile. Perhaps the most important verses that dispensationalism quotes are verses usually from Ezekiel, but there are some in Isaiah, and there are some in Jeremiah. There are some in some of the minor prophets where it says that God is going to restore the exiles from all the nations where they've been driven, bring them back to the land, and establish their nation again. No question. It does predict that. When were those predictions actually made? Well, when did Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel live? And the minor prophets, when did they

live? They lived *before or during* the Babylonian exile.

In other words, Israel was already scattered or was soon to be scattered to all the nations by Nebuchadnezzar. And they spent 70 years in that condition. But before that even happened, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and then during the exile, Ezekiel predicted that God is going to gather his people back to the land and restore the nation.

He did. It was in 539 BC, a guy named Cyrus, a Persian ruler, conquered the Babylonians and gave all the nations that Babylon had taken into captivity, gave them permission to go back to their ancestral homes, including Israel. And of course, for us, the most important thing in Old Testament history is that Israel was given the right to go back in fulfillment of the promises God made. He fulfilled the promise. They went back. It was Zerubbabel and Joshua, the high priest that led them.

Later on, Ezra and Nehemiah, not very much later on, took a bunch of them back too. Only a remnant came back. But the prophets had said that only a remnant would come back. God never said all the Jews were going to come back. He said a remnant, the faithful remnant, would come back. And they did. Over 500 years before Christ.

Now, after that happened, the only predictions about Israel and geography that we read about are the predictions that Jesus made, that Israel is going to be conquered by the Romans, the temple is going to be destroyed, and the Jewish people will be scattered to all the lands. So we have the prophets in the Old Testament predicting the scattering of the people in the time of Nebuchadnezzar and predicting the return of the people in the time of Cyrus.

And then Jesus predicts they're gonna be scattered again. And in my opinion, Zechariah predicted that too. He's hard to interpret, but I think that's what he's talking about.

Now, when then, after that, was there a promise made that God would bring them back from that more recent scattering in AD 70, where's the promise that they'll come back from that? Jesus made none. Paul didn't mention any. No New Testament writer did.

There's nothing in the New Testament that speaks of them coming back again after 70 AD. So what if God does not bring them back in the end times? Is he unfaithful? No, he promised it in the days of Jeremiah and Isaiah and Ezekiel, and he fulfilled it 500 years before Jesus was born. No other predictions of any return of the people have ever been made in the Bible since that time.

Now, let me show you some of the scriptures that they like to use. I remember when I was growing weary of my dispensationalism because I kept finding that the Bible didn't say what I was teaching it said, I began to wonder where are those scriptures that talk about God bringing the exiles back. Well, there's in quite a few prophets, there's a line here or a line there, but the main scriptures, and I found this to be true recently with every dispensationalist who's now talking about the present situation, they always want to go to

Ezekiel 36. That must be the best one for them. And 37, both of which do, in fact, talk about God bringing the Jews back and reestablish them in their land. I remember Ezekiel was along with the Jews in Babylon and in all the nations. They weren't just in Babylon. Babylon had conquered all the nations of the region and the exiles were scattered among them. The Jews were in all the nations of the region.

And these prophecies come along and, let's start here. Okay. In chapter 36 verse 19, God says,

"So I scattered them among the nations,"

Past tense. He's not talking about a future scattering in the future from his point of view. He's talking about a scattering that happened already, he's using the past tense.

"I scattered them in the Babylonians. I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the countries. I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. And when they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned my holy name when they said to them, these are the people of the Lord. And yet they have gone out of his land. But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations, wherever they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel."

Now, where is the house of Israel at this time? He said to them, they're in Babylon. Like him.

Therefore say to the house of Israel, thus says the Lord God, I do not do this for your sake or house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations, wherever you went. And I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. And the nation shall know that I'm Yahweh says the Lord God, when I'm hallowed in you before their eyes."

"For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all the countries and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you should be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols."

"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. I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will keep my judgments and do them."

Now, did this happen? Yes. God brought them back. They had a new heart.

Now see, someone was arguing with, Oh, how do we know that the people came back with a Zerubbabel were repentant? Well, you want to read the Bible in Ezra 1:5. It says, "All whose hearts the Lord had touched came and went to Jerusalem." They, they were moved by God. These were repentant people. That's why they wanted to build the temple. That's why they're willing to make such a long trek through the dangerous wilderness to build their temple. And they were committed to that. Most Jews in Babylon were not. Most of them just stayed there, but the remnant came.

And now what about this pouring of spirit out? I'm going to get to that. But first, we need to look at chapter 37, because this is the other chapter that's most often used. This is the vision of the dry bones. And we, we won't read it all because it's kind of a long narrative.

Ezekiel sees a vision of a wasteland, a desert, a wilderness, and there's dry human bones scattered all over the place. And God says, "Son of man, prophesy to these bones." And so he prophesied to the bones and they began to rattle and shake and assemble themselves. And they stood into full skeletons, and then flesh and skin and hair came upon them and they looked fully human, except that there's no, no breath in them, the same word in the Hebrew. There's no spirit in them.

Now here's what God says to Ezekiel. "Prophesy now to the spirit, *ruach* in the Hebrew. It can be breath, it can be wind, or it can be spirit. In the previous chapter, "I will put My Spirit in you" probably means not wind or breath, but spirit. And this is prophesying the same thing that chapter 36 was, but with different images.

Prophesy to the Spirit, and then the Spirit came in and they came alive. And then God explains it. And it says in verse 11,

"Then he said to me, son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel."

Not will be in the end times, *are now* while they are in Babylon, they are the whole house of Israel. They're scattered away from their homeland.

"They indeed say our bones are dry. Our hope is lost. And we ourselves are cut off."

That was the attitude that Jews in Babylon had.

"Therefore prophesy and say to them, thus says the Lord, God, behold, all my people. I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves."

This is figurative because they're not literal bones. They're people. "I'm going to bring you to life again as a nation." He's not talking about the resurrection of the last day here.

"I'll open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh when I've opened your graves, oh my people and brought you up from your graves, I will put my spirit in you." (Just like chapter 36) "And you shall live. And I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord have spoken it and performed it."

Now, these two prophecies, 36 and 37 of Ezekiel, say two things are going to happen. God says, "I'm going to take them from all the nations where they've been scattered, I'm going to bring them back to their own land." **That was signified by bones that are scattered being reassembled.** They weren't alive yet, but they were reassembled and looked fully human. There was nothing more to reassemble them. That was when Israel came back from Babylon to Israel and reestablished their nation, they were reassembled, but they weren't alive yet

spiritually. He says, "Then prophesy to the Spirit." And he also says in chapter six, "I will put My Spirit on them. I'll put my spirit in them and they'll do my work."

Well, when did *that* happen? Well, that happened at Pentecost. It was the returned exiles in Jerusalem that the Spirit was poured out upon on the faithful remnant who happened to be believers in Jesus Christ. Because only believers in Jesus Christ are faithful in any sense to God.

You cannot be faithful to God and reject the Messiah, the King that He sent. Jesus said, "Whoever does not honor me does not honor the Father who sent me." You can't honor God and reject Jesus no matter what John Hagee says.

Now, these people came back, God reassembled the nation and 500 years later, he poured his Spirit out on the remnant. It was the remnant who came back, and it was the remnant in Jerusalem that He poured His Spirit out on.

We call them the church. We call them the faithful disciples of Jesus. Only they can be called the faithful remnant remnant of Israel. The rest of Israel crucified him.

And so Ezekiel predicts a restoration of Israel in two phases. One, the regathering of the Jews to their land, which happened in the days of Cyrus, and the pouring out of His Spirit upon them subsequently, which happened at Pentecost. Now, the early Christians understood this kind of prophecy as being fulfilled in their time, because there are quite a few prophets that speak of God pouring out His Spirit, like a river in the wilderness and everything blossoming and budding and bringing forth fruit and so forth. There are lots of references, "rivers in the desert." Isaiah especially, but other passages to talk about God pouring out His Spirit as rivers in the desert. Isaiah 35, I think it's verses 15, 14, and 15 specifically say that these rivers of water are the Spirit poured out on them.

Well, God didn't pour out His Spirit on the remnant when they came back from Zechariah. Maybe, maybe some of them, you know, they had a changed heart, but His Spirit was not poured out on the remnant until Pentecost. And the New Testament writers who quote verses about that outpouring in Ezekiel and Isaiah and Jeremiah, they apply it to their own time. That is the church in Jerusalem believed that they were seeing the fulfillment.

One of those prophecies was Joel chapter two, where God said, "And I'll pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters will prophesy and your old men and young, your old men will see, dream, dream dreams, or your young men will see visions. I'll pour out my spirit on your maidservants and so forth and they'll prophesy." That's Joel chapter two, I think it's verse 28, but Peter said, "This is that!" He said it at Pentecost, "This is that!"

There's one outpouring of the Spirit predicted again and again in the prophets, just like there's one return of the exiles from Babylon again and again. It's just a common theme of the prophets. God sends them into Babylon. He restores them from Babylon. Then he'll pour His Spirit out of them. And Peter said, "This is that."

Now we can disagree with Peter if we want to, or we can make up things in the Bible to say, "Yeah, but there's going to be *another* outpouring on Israel and there's going to be *another* regathering in the end times!" Really?

Now, some people say, "Well, Steve, you're kind of on the wrong side of the cue ball here, because don't you know that God *has* in these last days restored the Jews to Israel? I mean, your interpretation is that this doesn't mean that, but it has happened against all odds. How could you not think that's a fulfillment of prophecy?" Well, one reason is I can't find any prophecy that is fulfilled by it. Even J. Vernon McGee didn't think it's a fulfillment of prophecy. He said, "No, they got to become believers first and then they can come back."

Now, I don't think that's come back at all because they came back already 500 years before Christ, and there was never another prediction of them ever coming back after that. But the truth is, what has happened there is not a fulfillment of any prophecy because **there is not a covenant nation called Israel anywhere on this planet right now**. Not even in the promised land. They are not a covenant people. They don't acknowledge God. They don't keep His covenant. They have met none of the conditions for the blessing, but they have met all the conditions for the curses to remain upon them that Deuteronomy said would be upon , and I don't wish it on them.

I have no animosity towards Jews. Again, I've had many friends who are Jewish. I think they're some of the most witty and fun people I've ever known. I've never had a bad thought toward a Jew. I'm just talking about the Bible here. If you say you're not a Zionist and that means you don't necessarily think the Bible teaches that this is a fulfillment of prophecy, people say, oh, you're anti-semitic.

I've heard Dennis Prager say that on a show. He said, "If you're not a Zionist, you're anti-Semitic." I think, well, wait a minute, Dennis, you're a smart man. I like to listen to Dennis Prager. He's a smart man. I agree with him most of the time but wait a minute.

Isn't anti-Semitism racism toward Jews? Okay. What is Zionism? It's a political philosophy. Zionism means you believe that the people of the Jews should and will come to Jerusalem and own that property. Now I can doubt that and still not be a racist. I don't think any of you have a divine mandate to inherit any particular piece of property. I'm not against whatever race you are.

Racism is an entirely different thing. Zionism is a political movement and it was not started by godly Jews. It was started by an atheist Jew, Theodor Herzl in the 1800s. But it really got some momentum when dispensationalists jumped on that bandwagon because they believed that was supposed to happen and they pushed and they pushed and they pushed and they pushed until President Truman finally gave in. And if you don't think that's a correct interpretation, read books on modern Jewish history written by non-Christian Jewish historians, every Jewish historian will admit that the modern nation of Israel is largely something brought about by dispensationalist American and British evangelicals.

And my Zionist friends said, "Well, yeah, but God could use that." He could. The only thing is He gives me no scripture to give me that interpretation of the facts.

God has not promised to do this. And if we're talking about these passages, he hasn't done it at all. Not only not in fulfillment of scripture, but He just hasn't done it at all.

(End of transcription. If interested you can hear Steve Gregg's entire talk on YouTube.

For more about dispensationalism, what it means, and what its influence is, [please see the many articles about it on this website.](#)