

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: R.C. Sproul on watching the Middle East****R.C. Sproul on watching the Middle East - posted by docs (), on: 2014/4/6 4:52**

"I don't know if the restoration is going to be sudden or gradual, or even if it is going to follow the return of the Jews to their own land. There is still quite a bit of debate about that. I remember sitting on my porch in Boston in 1967, and watching on television the Jewish soldiers coming into Jerusalem, dropping their weapons and rushing to the Wailing Wall, and weeping and weeping. Immediately I telephoned one of my dear friends, a professor of Old Testament theology, who does not believe that modern day Israel has any significance whatsoever. I asked him, "What do you think now? From 70 A.D. until 1967, almost 1900 years, Jerusalem has been under the domination and control of Gentiles, and now the Jews have recaptured the city of Jerusalem. Jesus said that Jerusalem will be trodden under foot by the Gentiles, until the fullness of the Gentiles be fulfilled. What's the significance of that? He replied, "I am going to have to rethink this situation." It was indeed startling."

"Well, 1967 was many years ago, and we have not seen the restoration of the Jewish nation, although we have seen the greatest concentration on eschatology that the church has ever known....Perhaps it will be another thousand years before the Jews have complete control of Jerusalem. Maybe present arrangements are just a temporary interlude. It is possible that the Arabs will drive the Jews out of Jerusalem and the Jewish people will be put to exile again, and this present attempt to recover the Promised Land will be abortive - who knows? I don't know what the significance of it all is. But I will tell you this: we should be watching very carefully."

(R. C. Sproul, "The Gospel of God: Romans" (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1990), 191-192n.

I ran across this curious quote by Dr. Sproul he wrote back in 1990. I don't think he needs to be quite so ambivalent as to the final outcome of these events but that's my opinion. I would suppose he hasn't quit watching and I don't agree with the prophetic cottage industry that has grown up around every little event that occurs in the Middle East. But for what it's worth, I thought I might just share this intriguing little bit he wrote because in the proper balance and spirit I think these events are very relevant and worth keeping an eye on.

I realize there are people of this forum who disagree as to the importance and relevance of modern Israel and I'm not addressing this necessarily to them. Nor am I trying to address the timing of the rapture. So there's no need to make posts refuting modern Israel's place in prophecy etc. or the rapture etc. I'm aware there are differences and respect those. I'm just sharing for those who might have an interest.

Blessings to all this day.

**Re: R.C. Sproul on watching the Middle East - posted by budgie, on: 2014/4/8 21:40**

Well presented docs

Very true

Jowls trumpet and Wallis whoever are good to look at

**One but not the other? - posted by docs (), on: 2014/4/9 8:50**

Quoting,

The theme of Israel's sinfulness recurs throughout Isaiah. For instance, no modern writer could pen an indictment more vivid and severe than the words of Isaiah 59:2-8:

2 - But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God,  
And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

3 - For your hands are defiled with blood  
And your fingers with iniquity;  
Your lips have spoken falsehood,

Your tongue mutters wickedness.

4 - No one sues righteously and no one pleads **honestly**.  
**They trust in confusion and speak lies;**  
**They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.**

5 - **They hatch adders' eggs and weave the spider's web;**  
**He who eats of their eggs dies,**  
**And from that which is crushed a snake breaks forth.**

6 - **Their webs will not become clothing,**  
**Nor will they cover themselves with their works;**  
**Their works are works of iniquity,**  
**And an act of violence is in their hands.**

7 - **Their feet run to evil,**  
**And they hasten to shed innocent blood;**  
**Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity,**  
**Devastation and destruction are in their highways.**

8 - **They do not know the way of peace,**  
**And there is no justice in their tracks;**  
**They have made their paths crooked,**  
**Whoever treads on them does not know peace.**

Furthermore, similar indictments are found in most of Israel's other prophets. This is all the more significant because the same prophets who described in clear detail the sins of Israel also predicted with equal clarity and equal detail the restoration of Israel.

If the prophets of Israel had been blind, sentimental and nationalistic and had overlooked the sins of the people, then we could say their promises of restoration were merely unrealistic, wishful thinking. But since the same prophets who promised restoration were the ones who uttered the indictments, I see no logic or consistency in endorsing the indictments and refusing the promises of restoration.

From The "Destiny Of Israel And The Church: Destinies Once Again Beginning To Converge" - (Derek Prince -1992, 2007, p 37-38).

**Me:** The author brings up a good point in my opinion. Why do the modern critics of Israel in the church seem so intent many times on pointing out modern Israel's sins ONLY yet at the same time denying the prophecies of restoration that came from the same prophets who confronted the nation? If the indictments and resulting punishments came true then it seems illogical to deny the prophesied literal restoration will come true. It's not being "Israel centered" but cross centered because Israel's literal spiritual restoration won't come without the elect remnant acknowledging that the Christ who was crucified and rose again is indeed their Messiah.

**Re: One but not the other? - posted by TomfromOZ, on: 2014/4/9 20:18**

G'day brother

you ask: Why do the modern critics of Israel in the church seem so intent many times on pointing out modern Israel's sins ONLY yet at the same time denying the prophecies of restoration that came from the same prophets who confronted the nation?

It would appear that many in the church have either written off Israel (meaning the literal biological descendants of Jacob) as having any significance to the ultimate plans and purposes of God in these days or relegate any apparent biblical significance of that people and "the Land" to only minor significance.

I believe this has developed out of a mis-appropriation of scripture. In church history (especially since the reformation) many have taken to spiritualising the text in many places where Israel's future is stated in the word. Meaning: whenever you find an unfulfilled promise relating to "Israel" this now becomes a promise only to the Church, because God has finished

with Israel.

God's character is under threat when we start to revise his promises as such.

It is my belief that Israel will be an ultimate evidence to the nations of His grace toward mankind. That a people so proud, so full of self accomplishment and ability and human achievement will yet be brought to a place of ultimate brokenness, repentance and salvation beyond their own ability. God will be glorified because this is the same work of the Gospel that each one of us experiences individually, yet he promises to do this with a nation. Your own understanding of your own salvation is brought into review when you examine God's extended grace to this people group.

I have no desire to argue about these matters. These are issues that the church needs to have respectful discussion about. I suppose a believer's salvation is not at stake by having an incorrect eschatology, but, a believer can miss MUCH because of it.

Art Katz and Reggie Kelly spoke and wrote much about these issues that you can find on Sermon Index.

In Christ

Tom from oZ

#### **Ethnic and natural Israel no longer of interest to God? - posted by docs (), on: 2014/5/3 16:29**

In my experience, there seems to be a strong stream of thought in many parts of the body of Christ that ethnic and natural Israel as best personified in the modern state of Israel is persona non grata in the eyes of God. The theological reasoning is that God has to a large degree disinherited them and they are non relevant.

Someone brought up a quote from Hosea which got me thinking and reading a bit again along these lines.

National Ethnic Israel is "Not His people" but in the future they will again be called "sons of the living God" .

When God spoke of ethnic Israel not being His people He was speaking to unbelieving Israel. Yet He says this unbelieving segment will once again be called "sons of the living God." It speaks to me of God having a peculiar and special concern, biblically a covenantal concern, for the unbelieving part of Israel. I wonder if there were critics in that day who only saw Israel's sin and unbelief and that was the ONLY thing they spoke of concerning Israel? If so, it's the same today. Many speak today of ethnic Israel and the modern nation of Israel's unbelief ONLY and never say anything regarding the prophecies regarding ethnic Israel's restoration and redemption. If they do, the original intent and meaning of the prophecies has many times been obscured by over spiritualizing them. Those not a people will again become God's people and not because of anything in themselves but because of pure undeserved grace. So why so callously write off unbelieving Israel of today and speak of their unbelief ONLY and make dang sure everyone knows they are no longer God's people? God is not through with them yet. As someone has asked, "Can we believe for a transformed Jacob before he is transformed?"

Quoting,

"...God's dealing with the nation of Israel is not merely with the Israel after the Spirit, with the remainder having no identity in the sight of God. Israel after the flesh was still the recipient of God's covenantal interest. Granted it was of this world, so to speak. But that in no way nullifies the fact that God in human history had a covenantal interest in the earthly nation of Israel in total, both spiritual and carnal. We are repeatedly told that God's persistence with national Israel, from the very beginning of its redemption, is for the sake of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." So we would conclude that it ought not to surprise us that in this present age, while there is a "remnant according to grace" (Rom 11:5), this language of necessity demands that there is an unbelieving national Israel that still has God's offended yet loving and steadfast covenantal interest, "for the sake of the fathers" (Rom 11:28).

In further consideration of the fact that unbelieving national Israel today retains God's covenantal interest, Dan Gruber noted from Rom 10:21-11:2 that when Paul called himself "an Israelite," that is, a descendant of Abraham through Benjamin, "he was identifying himself with his unfaithful physical brethren."

Paul is pointing to his own relationship with God as proof of the fact that God has not cast off unfaithful Israel. For indeed

d, Paul himself was part of unfaithful Israel."

Gruber further observed that Israel in 10:21 and 11:2 refers to physical Israel and includes the "disobedient and defiant," that is, unbelievers. Nevertheless, Paul called them "His people." And the unbelieving remnant, of which Paul considered himself a part, was a subset of "His people."

The fact that the faithful in Israel are a "remnant of Israel" indicates that there is much more of Israel that is not faithful. Paul makes this quite clear. Otherwise, there could not be a remnant. Had "Israel" signified only the faithful, God's continual call to Israel throughout the Bible would not have been to repentance, but to perseverance. Paul said, "I could pray that I myself were anathema, separated from the Messiah for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh, who is over all God blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 9:3-5). It is clear that he is talking about physical, natural Israel. It is impossible to understand his words differently. It is from them that Messiah came. It is to them that the adoption, glory, and covenants etc. belong. It is they who are Israelites. Had "Israel" signified the faithful only, there would have been no need for, and no sense to, Paul's "unceasing grief and continual sorrow," nor his willingness to be accursed for their salvation.

\* Taken from "Future Israel" by Barry Horner which includes quotes from Dan Gruber.

D. Gruber, "The Church and The Jews" (Hagerstown, MD: Elijah, 1997). 365-66.

Ibid., 365-66.

Also,

#### **Ethnic and natural Israel no longer of interest to God? - posted by docs (), on: 2014/5/3 16:30**

In my experience, there seems to be a strong stream of thought in many parts of the body of Christ that ethnic and natural Israel as best personified in the modern state of Israel is persona non grata in the eyes of God. The theological reasoning is that God has to a large degree disinherited them and they are non relevant.

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D. Gruber, "The Church and The Jews" (Hagerstown, MD: Elijah, 1997). 365-66.

Ibid., 365-66.

**I'm sorry for the double post right below - posted by docs (), on: 2014/5/3 16:32**

It was completely unintentional.

Thank you.

**Re: I'm sorry for the double post right below - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/5/3 16:49**

Docs-

If ethnic Israel IS restored at some point, by what means do you believe that will happen?

**Re: Reply for TMK - posted by docs (), on: 2014/5/7 6:39**

Thanks for your question. I'm sorry I didn't get back sooner but things can get busy as you likely know.

You wrote,

"Docs,

If ethnic Israel IS restored at some point, by what means do you believe that will happen?"

I've got to admit I'm a little gun shy at this point. If it's not out of line, can I ask first if you believe in the spiritual restoration of the modern state of Israel? I know I said some things about beliefs other than mine but believers in the body of Christ who don't believe in this restoration have not so long ago told me that Israel is setting up camps to practice the type of ethnic cleansing that was practiced on them in the Nazi camps. That's one of the most preposterous and untrue statements I've ever heard and isn't close to being true. I've also been told that Israel is more interested in killing Christians than interested in God. These people are otherwise strong in their knowledge of the scriptures and are very obviously committed to Christ and His salvation and are attempting to walk that salvation out. Yet their particular brand of theology and eschatology leads them to many times criticize Israel for their unbelief ONLY. Israel is seen as non relevant to the plan of God and instead of looking at the prophecies of what I believe will be Israel's eventual spiritual restoration they don't even

n acknowledge these prophecies as being about Israel. The allegorization of these prophecies of eventual restoration has rendered modern Israel persona non grata in the views of many. I remain perplexed that many attitudes in the church today are condescendingly mocking and almost bordering on hostile toward Israel. Meanwhile, little or no criticism is spoken against Israel's hostile Muslim neighbors who have always and still do behave much worse than Israel. So, if you don't believe in the restoration of the elect ethnic Israel (a remnant worldwide and in Israel) including a return to geographical land borders within the modern state then I'd rather not give my reply if I'm just going to be met by negative statements as to why this can't be. That may make me appear elitist or like a prima donna but I'm not trying to come across that way. I'm still bruised and gun shy a bit after other Christians spoke the things against Israel I mentioned above (ethnic cleansing camps etc.). Yet if you're truly interested we can talk a bit more. I can say that I'm not dispensational or pre-trib in my beliefs. Also, I believe the church has a divinely designed role to play during the time of coming trouble for Jewry and modern Israel. I believe the church's witness during this time will help heal the historical breach between the Jews and the church that has been caused by the church's treatment of Jews over the centuries. Much is yet to be done and much is at stake. Acknowledging the cross and the risen Christ will be at the heart of the restoration.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/5/7 7:50**

Hey docs--

I have no agenda on this topic.

I am just wondering what you mean when you say the restoration of national Israel and by what means that will occur. In other words what do you mean by restored? Do you mean that all Jews will bow the knee to Jesus as Lord and savior and Messiah?

There is an element of believers who think that God will sanction the reinstatement of animal sacrifices in a rebuilt temple. THAT is what I have a major problem with.

**Re: - posted by budgie, on: 2014/5/9 22:53**

When Jesus arose from the grave his disciples asked Jesus in words to the effect of will you now begin to reign as king in Jerusalem that the godly kingdom may be restored

Jesus reply was that day is up to God

The word says that Jesus must stay in heaven until the kingdom again is restored in Israel

Jesus is prophecies as the king of the Jews

The lion of the tribe of Judah

The king of kings

When he comes at the day of resurrection he will be the king and will reign for 1000 years of rest of sabbath

Satan will be bound

Every knee will now

He will fulfil all his kingly prophecies

God loves the land of Israel

It is where it all first began

Jesus is king

**Re: Reply for TMK on Israel's resoration - posted by docs (), on: 2014/5/10 10:24**

You wrote,

"I have no agenda on this topic."

"I am just wondering what you mean when you say the restoration of national Israel and by what means that will occur. In other words what do you mean by restored? Do you mean that all Jews will bow the knee to Jesus as Lord and savior and Messiah?"

Me: In my last sentence I wrote,

"Acknowledging the cross and the risen Christ will be at the heart of the restoration."

I mean first of all the spiritual regeneration by faith in Christ of a elect remnant of ethnic Israel. The remnant of Israel is spoken of about 40 times in scripture and most of those instances are set in an eschatological context. So along with a spiritual restoration in Christ I also believe in the restoration of the physical nation of Israel to the physical borders promised it in the scriptures. I don't share the view that land is somehow unspiritual and demeans the meaning and nature of the kingdom. In my opinion that's contrary to the Hebrew world view in which the scriptures were penned and in which the spiritual and the physical are easily combined. But the spiritual will be of preeminent and paramount importance.

You asked by what means this will occur. In that regard, my view is that Daniel spoke of a time of trouble and distress to come to his people that would exceed anything that came before it (Daniel 12:1) and Jesus echoed this view in Matthew 24:21. I see this as the time when God's final judgments are poured out upon the earth for its increasing and gross iniquity but also the time when God will be gathering the eschatological remnant of Israel and grafting them back in. Not all of this gathering will be in the physical nation of Israel. I believe much will be happening in the nations also as a burgeoning number of the natural branches become believers in Christ. Yet the time of final tribulation before the coming of the son of man will serve to strip and shatter the power of Israel (Daniel 12:7) and bring them to the end of their own presumption and strength. When they have nothing else to rely upon then they will be ready to come to the table with nothing but faith just as all other believers have been required to do. I believe that from Israel Christ ascended on high and to that to Israel He will return and at that time they will "look on Him whom they pierced" and enter into great repentance (Zechariah 12:10-14) and from that day forward among the survivors of Israel (Zechariah 13:8, Isaiah 4:2-3) there will not be one who doesn't know the Lord (Jer 31:34). From that time forward, "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring, says the Lord, "From now and forever." (Isaiah 59:20-21). Being premillennial, I believe Israel will be in Christ and will never backslide again and the oppression of hostile Gentile powers will have been forever broken off of them allowing the nation to dwell in unmolested safety and be a millennial blessing to the entire earth.

14 - And I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities (destroyed during the tribulation?) and live in them. they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit.

15 - I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them," says the Lord your God. (Amos 9:14-15)

1 - "For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem

2 - I will gather all the nations, and bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgement with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land. (Joel 3:1-2)

At the time of the restoration of the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem the issue will be God entering into judgement against the nations because of they scattered Israel among the nations and "divided up My land." So a land conflict is at center stage at the end of the age. First though, just as the prophets predicted, the issue of Jerusalem and Israel will become a cup of reeling and a heavy stone to the nations (Zech 12:2-3) and will be an international crisis that will continue to grow and increasingly threaten world stability. If all these things supposedly happened in the days of Christ why have we come full circle and are facing the same situation again as Israel is once again surrounded by hostile armies and powers intent on wresting the land and Jerusalem away from Jewish ownership? If all these things happened in the days of Christ then when did the son of Man come again because scripture and the Olivet Discourse portray these things as culminating in the second advent of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. It's safe to say that the dead have not been resurrected so it's naturally safe to say the Son of Man has not come again because when He comes again He will resurrect the righteous dead. Simple. The belief He already came again in judgment on the clouds with great glory simply doesn't hold water since the second coming the Olivet Discourse ends in brings with it the resurrection of the dead. The dead were not resurrected in 70 A.D.

You wrote,

"There is an element of believers who think that God will sanction the reinstatement of animal sacrifices in a rebuilt temple. THAT is what I have a major problem with."

That is a fair statement and one that needs to be discussed and dealt with in a civil climate. I'm familiar with the belief and the controversy and the arguments. It can be perplexing and is one of the more difficult portions of scripture to deal with even though it's not an essential for salvation. In this regard, which scriptures and set of passages do you see that this

element of believers uses to support this view? Which ones would you pinpoint as those they use?