

# The Essential Israel Project<sup>1</sup>

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This short paper describes something that has come to be called “The Essential Israel Project”. It attempts, on the bases of biblical study and roundtable facilitated discussions with people experienced and knowledgeable in a wide range of related fields, to answer the question; “What are the essentials for every individual and church to believe and do concerning Israel?” Our goal was to be able to honestly and confidently honor God, Israel, and all peoples in accordance with God’s spoken word. So here we go.

## ***The Swirl***

There is such a swirl of activity concerning Israel and the Middle East, in the physical and in the spiritual sense. To enter that swirl is to be buffeted. I am so very aware that to wade into this volatile theme is to potentially alienate about half the people on the planet. In a recent international poll Israel was ranked the least popular country in the world. The news today (perhaps always) is replete with Israel-related stories, editorials and opinions – and it is often hard to tell the difference. Much of it is untrustworthy I am told. There are strongly held ideas, practices, beliefs, and prejudices on every side.

For most of the world the Middle East situation is thought to be best handled with peace talks stressing compromise, and neutral forces keeping combatants apart. We should work for peace and justice among all people groups in the Middle East. And that is right. That is a high and noble priority. No argument there. The fact that this conflict seems to exist at a more long-term and intense level than other conflicts on earth is said to be all about oil, or the fact that Jerusalem is the center of three world religions, or that the Palestinians are unjustly displaced by Jews, who, in turn, were returned part of their ancient land in recognition of the great injustices done to them throughout history, and culminating in the Holocaust.

As a Christian who holds the bible in the highest regard I have several more possibilities for confusion than the rest of the

world.

First of all, what place do the Jews now hold in the eyes and plan of God? Are they “has-beens” replaced by the church – as much of the Christendom was taught for centuries? Are they special and still the “Chosen People”? Has something changed? How should we think about all that?

Secondly, for Christians there is a whole eschatological (end times) dynamic that really throws things into high gear. Is this “it”? Will Christ really return sometime soon, or are the amillennialists or postmillennialists right and it either won’t happen or has already taken place – sort of subtly? And if He is coming back what does that have to do with Israel and me?

Thirdly, there is a cause and effect in the world that is invisible, powerful and pervasive. Jesus can look right through Peter and say, “get thee behind me Satan.” (Matt 16:22). Scripture is replete with similar examples. The Book of Revelation indicates that the demonic world will be active and insidious in its puppeteering of people and influence on events. What would it look like and mean if all peoples were united against Israel? Am I willing to understand and accept the fact that all is not as it seems on the surface and know that my ultimate battle is not against people but this evil murky world (Eph 6:12)?

It is a relatively small, but fast growing, slice of the Christian pie that actively believes that the Jews are currently specially chosen for a specific purpose and that Christ will return bodily and that spiritual warfare is taking place behind the physical conflict. Many individuals and churches seem to be caught somewhere between vague guilt and apathetic or passive indifference in this area – most are in some confusion about their own stance and beliefs just like I was. Many feel that it is too complex and fraught with potential misunderstanding and so, remain interested, but on the sidelines.

I began to see that, like me, there is a very strong need in the body of Christ for some neutral (maybe naïve is a better word !) attempt to sort out the voices and to try to answer the simple question as clearly as we can: “What are the essentials for every individual and church to believe and do concerning Israel?”

### ***The Bucket Exercise – The Buckets***

When we think about Israel “stuff” it seems to naturally fall into one of several “buckets.” None of the buckets are unimportant or trivial and all have a place. Keep an open mind about this arrangement and I think you may find it helpful.

#### ***The Foggy End Times and Complex Interpretation Bucket***

There are quite a few verses in scripture concerning Israel that are hard to understand, and over which equally qualified, much anointed men and women differ. They are in the general areas of doctrine, application of scriptures not directly related to the topic, and end times prophecy. The rapture, Gog, the 144,000, the concept of honoring spiritual parents, dispensations, spiritual versus physical Israel, etc. all bring differences of opinion. In books, web sites and other literature there are many examples of scriptures lifted out of context and applied to Israel and our responsibility toward her. There is no lack of cult-like beliefs concerning Israel where tortuous interpretations of scripture are necessary to uncover some “hidden truth” about Israel and me.

There are a large number of scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments that talk about Israel in a way that seems clearly future. And to look around, most of us can get a sense of “the turning of the times.” But when we get down to taking a scripture that is foggy and trying to make a definitive point about it, beyond the obvious and clear things it says, we leave most of the hearers confused or wondering how we can come to such sure conclusions from such unsure sources. That kind of debate may be fun for the debaters but is normally not helpful in steering a church or an individual life onto a course aligned with

God.

In this bucket are also true facts concerning Israel, just not essential facts. There are historical facts about Israel’s establishment, deportation, historic dates, return and second return (and third, etc.). There are neat ideas about genealogies and names. There are shocking facts about the church’s writings about and treatment of Jews. There are biblical tidbits – even important tidbits that make us smile, that encourage us, that become applications in our lives or in our churches. But these are not the weighty essentials that form the foundation of our understanding and belief about Israel. And when we camp around these things without the others as a foundation we get off track.

There is a place for the contents of this bucket – debate and scriptural inquiry sharpen both our minds and our hunger for revealed truth. Historical facts are important. But these subjects do not have the simplicity and clarity necessary for the Essential Israel bucket.

#### ***The Sentimental, Emotional and Personal Experience Bucket***

I like to celebrate some of the feasts of Israel. Our children got as much out of Passover as they did out of Easter. We have cherished some of the fun elements of looking for the well hidden afikomen, or getting the yeast out of the corners of the house. I love throwing rocks way out into a lake and knowing my sins are equally submerged beneath God’s love and forgiveness.

In this bucket go things that may be very fun, very fulfilling, very meaningful. They may involve my personal choice of Jewish ways, dress, practices, music, dance, etc. They may also include personal experiences with God and a trip to Israel, a dream or vision in the night, a sense of longing and even tears at the evening news.

But is doing these things, as meaningful as they are, the focus of “Essential Israel”?

Emotional ties are essential to us as humans. We tend to, consciously or not, base many decisions on emotions – or “brain chemistry” I

am reminded. While facts are fine, it is emotional impact and involvement that motivate us to action. But as I look around at some of the swirl I can see how vitally important it is that my emotional reactions and actions are based on rock solid truth foundations, simply and clearly articulated and balanced in scripture. History is full of strong, even explosive, emotions focused on Israel – both pro and con. Yet it is only clear truth that can set the boundaries within which my emotions can be expressed safely and even righteously.

I am personally motivated to love both Israel and those of Arabic ancestry, and feel a bit of angst because my church forebears have so harshly treated them. There are true things about making amends. These things may be vital to eventual restoration of unity among all God fearing peoples. They may even be the things that are on God's front burner for this time and place. But if we start there we often tend to leave about half the church behind, wondering about their own ancestors' complicity with past ill treatment, and confused about why all this is happening or even important.

We must start with basics, with Essential Israel. That stuff is great "second story" material, but is not foundational in steering and aligning a church with God concerning Israel. I love this bucket, but only after a long drink from the Essential Israel bucket.

### ***The Essential Israel Bucket***

This is the core of what is in God's heart and mind concerning Israel. In this bucket are the nonnegotiables, the clear will and purpose of God. It is filled with non-optional (from God's perspective), non-negotiable, non-foggy essentials. In it are the things that God has clearly stated concerning Israel and the Jews. It is this bucket with which we churches and individuals MUST align, calibrate, and order our lives, beliefs and actions. It is similar on concept to our understanding of God's heart for the poor – there is a basic set of truth that is true for every man for every time and place. And to be at cross purposes with that truth is to be, in some sense, at cross purposes with God.

We can think of this bucket being divided into two main aspects:

1. First, God has purposes, both at all times, and at certain times. There are always negative consequences when we align ourselves at cross purposes with God, or when we simply ignore His purposes. If God has clear purposes concerning Israel then we should purpose and act as individuals and as churches to be as aligned with them as we can be. If there are negative consequences as a result of being misaligned with God's purposes, then there are also rewards and blessings from flowing with the purposes of God.
2. Second are the express and clear commands of God to all people for all time concerning Israel which must be obeyed. All commands must be obeyed as a matter of relationship and lordship – commands concerning the poor, the church, prayer, etc. In Israel's case there may be commands which we recognize, purpose, and arrange our lives, to obey.

### ***The Bucket Exercise – Roundtable***

So, with that framework, I decided to get some help - to get a group of experts on Israel, some well known Messianic Jewish types and a some elder/shepherd types and to discuss together what these essentials might be. Here is what we did.

After a bit of fun, food and worship we sat in a circle. Going around the circle, each person got a chance to tell the rest one thing they felt was important about Israel to them. Clarifying questions were asked and their thoughts were put on a butcher paper tablet.

After several rounds, a lot of laughter and a few tears, a list of about thirty thoughts was developed. Then each person was challenged to look carefully and prayerfully at the list and vote for the eight concepts that they thought were the most essential to them, using any criteria they wished to use. There was a lot of

fun haggling. After that, through a series of discussions the list was clarified and tied to scripture. Loving risk, I then ran this past some of my liberal friends for balance. Finally, I sought to amplify and classify these things for simplicity. The blame for this is mine.

The table at the end is the result. Many things did not make the cut. Your use of it depends on you. Our hope is that you consider it carefully and then decide to make some aligning changes in your life – your belief, and your actions.

## **Summary Thoughts**

There are a few framing thoughts that also occurred in the conversations that night. Prior to reading the table, think about this.

- **Justice and Compassion.** Remember that this exercise is primarily about Israel. But God calls each people group by a special name, and has a special plan for each. As you read the table below you will see, like in the time of Joshua and Jericho, that God does not take sides – His is the only side that matters (Josh 5:14). Those that are on His side are blessed and protected – Jew and gentile alike. Those who live in wanton idolatry and rebellion are judged – Jew and gentile alike. Both are equally loved by God and called to become, not “Christians” (that carries insurmountable cultural and historical baggage), but simply followers of Jesus – Prophet, Messiah, Son of God. Understand that those most victimized by terrorism and tyranny are the ones who must live daily under its control. Am I willing to suspend my right to judge (as if I am omniscient enough to know history and heart), obey God concerning Israel, and try to maintain God’s love and mercy perspective on all peoples in the Middle East?
- **Sovereignty.** God is sovereign. The end times will be much about God making choices and taking actions. He is immune to political and doctrinal correctness. He does not care what the majority thinks – He IS the supermajority. There may be events that occur that do not make sense, that seem too terrible for God to allow, that seem to trump righteousness and allow for the reign of terror and evil. At the end of the age it is clear that He will allow our minds to be offended to reveal the contents of our hearts. Am I willing to accept the stance Paul takes and declare that some of the ways and actions of God are unfathomable, and that is alright by me (Rom 11:33-36)? Do I trust God’s demonstrated justice, mercy and grace enough to go with Him?
- **Scripture as the Foundation.** The facts on the ground, media prejudices, political correctness, senses of justice and injustice, emotional pictures and stories can sway us. But is that what I want to lay as a foundation. Will I be blown around by every wind of rumor and stirringly horrific picture or story in the news. Or am I willing to order my life based on clear scripture before other considerations of justice, prejudice, political correctness and the facts on the ground? It is not easy to do so. But God gives us enough to go on, when combined with...
- **Biblical vs. Revelatory Knowledge.** Despite ample written prophetic warning most missed Jesus’ first coming. A few did not. Anna and Simeon recognized Jesus not because they were experts in the scripture (that would be the Pharisees and the Sadducees) but because they had trained themselves to be sensitive and expectant (Lk 2:25,36). They had set their hearts on a course of excited and humble acceptance of God’s changing times. God will look different. He will show Himself to be fierce and One who is executing judgment. Then it will not be knowing the scriptures that counts but knowing Him (Dan 11:32) and training our hearts and wills to anticipate and submit to Him as He moves and brings events about. Will we recognize Him as such, or will our concept of Him as only a loving Abba cause us to miss it?
- **Doctrinal Differences.** This may not apply to all of you, but will totally apply to some. We believe that scripture is absolute and that Jesus is coming back again. If I do not have a pre-millennialist orientation (one

who believes Messiah will come again and reign on earth) am I willing to consider that stance? If I have had a stance that the church totally replaced Israel in all the plans of God am I willing to think again? What does it look like to be open to being wrong?

- **Details Details.** All this could be wrong. At the least I will not get some of the details right. Some wording or emphasis will not suit personal belief. Arguing about Israel is pandemic. Doing such puts off the need to change and submit. And the end times will be all about accepting and even embracing what God is doing. Am I willing to set aside many potential details of disagreement to consider the thrust of what is being presented – and to order my life accordingly as God, not man, convicts?
- **God Acts in Space-Time.** Daniel saw that it would be seventy years before the return of Israel (Dan 9:2). He saw it was nearly time and began to order his life for that return. Times will change. God will operate in a different way. Am I ready to accept that things will not remain status quo and embrace the changing ages and objectives of God (2 Pet 3:3)?
- **Western Mind Set.** Finally, it is important to remember that the West is no better than the Middle East, only different. We experience great freedoms here. You can believe what you want. But we also experience great societal challenges and disadvantages as well. Our capitalistic greed, materialism, wanton sensuality, addiction-based life styles and cultural violence are anathema to much of the Middle East, and rightly so. We must not look with arrogance on the situation or people in the Middle East, nor impose our brand of culture on them, but love and serve with cautious humility. We will all stand before God. If I am from the West can I look with humility at the Middle East and grieve for their culturally and religiously caused sin, pain and trouble while remembering our decisions and failings cause our own?

As you prepare to study the table below I want to challenge you to concentrate on the middle column. The left column is a simple titling of a grouping of like scriptures that express the purposes, ways and commands of God. The right column is one person's interpretation of a unique discussion and interaction – The Essential Israel Project. If it is helpful, fine. But make your own right-hand column, your own declarations. Let God nudge, illuminate, and convict you. Let Him inspire you with truth and excite you with ideas and leadings.

Most of all, let Him change you and give you His heart for the times and peoples of the Middle East, and your own place aligned and at peace with Him. Have fun!

## ***Finally***

## The Essential Israel Project Table

Essential Truth	Scriptural Text(s)	Brief Discussion/ Personal Application
<b><i>Scriptures that Reflect the Purposes of God</i></b>		
<p><b><i>God Makes Sovereign Choices</i></b></p>	<p>Gen 12:2,3 “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”</p> <p>Rom 11:28,29b, 33 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!</p> <p>Ex 19:5,6 Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.</p> <p>Deut 26:18,19 The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken.</p> <p>Zech 2:8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, “After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye.”</p> <p>Ezek 5:5-9 Thus says the Lord GOD, “This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, with lands around her. But she has rebelled against My ordinances more wickedly than the nations and against My statutes more than the lands which surround her; for they have rejected My ordinances and have not walked in My statutes.” Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, “Because you have more turmoil than the nations which surround you and have not walked in My statutes, nor observed My ordinances, nor observed the ordinances of the nations which surround you,” therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I, even I, am against you, and I will execute judgments among you in the sight of the nations. And because of all your abominations, I will do among you what I have not done, and the like of which I will never do again.”</p> <p>Is 19:24,25 In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.”</p>	<p>God is sovereign and makes choices for His multiple purposes. It is His prerogative. He does not ask permission nor does He even demand that we fully understand to be in agreement.</p> <p>God has a special name and a special relationship/purpose with every nation or people group. There could be a book written about each, its faithfulness and failings. This just happens to be about the Jews because of their particular calling.</p> <p>God made a sovereign choice of a man: Abraham, and a nation: Israel. He chose a man and was faithful to that man through the generations. Being “chosen” is no picnic. It is not easy for the one(s) chosen, especially if they violate the conditions of any covenant involved.</p> <p>It is clear from scripture that our agreement and submission to His choices will become a measuring stick for the nations and for individuals. If I bless His choice of Abraham I will, in turn, be blessed – and vice versa. If I touch Israel so as to harm her I will suffer.</p> <p>God does play favorites, and I am one of them! Remember, He individually chose me too (1 Pet 2:9, Eph 1:4).</p> <p>Declaration: <b><i>“I choose today to adopt an attitude of support, agreement, and blessing of God’s choice of Abraham and Israel while recognizing His love for all peoples. I will not begrudge Israel its unique place in God’s plan.”</i></b></p>

Essential Truth	Scriptural Text(s)	Brief Discussion/ Personal Application
<p><b><i>There Will Always Be A Nation Of Israel</i></b></p>	<p>Jer 31:35-36 Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: If this fixed order departs from before Me,” declares the LORD, then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever.” Thus says the LORD, “If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,” declares the LORD.</p> <p>Rom 11:1,2a I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.</p> <p>Jer 46:28 “O Jacob My servant, do not fear,” declares the LORD, “For I am with you. For I will make a full end of all the nations where I have driven you, yet I will not make a full end of you; but I will correct you properly and by no means leave you unpunished.”</p>	<p>The nation of Israel will <u>never</u> cease to exist before God. Whether Israel is physically in the land or not, this is true. Through the centuries and around the globe, despite impossible odds, a distinct remnant nation has always existed – and in this age always will.</p> <p>Any human action, belief, doctrine, attitude or program that in some way purports to erase Israel from God’s plan, or reduce them as a people, should be shunned and opposed. This includes all forms of racism and prejudice.</p> <p>Declaration: <b><i>“I choose today to support the existence and distinctness of Jewish people worldwide and to oppose anything that seeks their diminution or destruction.”</i></b></p>
<p><b><i>There Is A Physical Land That Belongs To The Jews</i></b></p>	<p>Deut 32:8,9 When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. For the LORD’S portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.</p> <p>Gen 15:18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.”</p> <p>Ps 105:7-11 He is the LORD our God. His judgments are in all the earth. He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion of your inheritance.”</p> <p>Ex 23:31 I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.</p> <p>Num 34:1-12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Command the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When</p>	<p>The earth is His world to partition as He sees fit and I have to trust His justice (Ps 89:11). God is the one who has chosen the land and boundaries of all peoples. He specifically set Israel’s boundaries. While there is some disagreement on the actual state of those boundaries today, or whether the boundaries can change due to disobedience, the fact that Israel (and all nations) was given a land by God is unquestionable.</p> <p>The facts on the ground always cloud every issue. I must stand on scripture first of all, and then work from there for justice for all. All injustice is relative but real and repugnant. No sound thinking person can ignore the injustice done to the Jewish people over the centuries, nor can we ignore that done to the inhabitants of the land who were displaced post World War II.</p> <p>Who are the original inhabitants? To whom</p>

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	<p>you enter the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance, even the land of Canaan according to its borders. Your southern sector shall extend from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom, and your southern border shall extend from the end of the Salt Sea eastward. Then your border shall turn direction from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim and continue to Zin, and its termination shall be to the south of Kadesh-barnea; and it shall reach Hazaraddar and continue to Azmon. The border shall turn direction from Azmon to the brook of Egypt, and its termination shall be at the sea. As for the Western border, you shall have the Great Sea, that is, its coastline; this shall be your West border. And this shall be your north border: you shall draw your border line from the Great Sea to Mount Hor. You shall draw a line from Mount Hor to the Lebo-hamath, and the termination of the border shall be at Zedad; and the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and its termination shall be at Hazar-enan. This shall be your north border. For your eastern border you shall also draw a line from Hazar-enan to Shepham, and the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go down and reach to the slope on the east side of the Sea of Chinnereth. And the border shall go down to the Jordan and its termination shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land according to its borders all around.”</p> <p>Deut 1:8 See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them.</p> <p>Eze 37:25 They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever.</p> <p>Lev 19:33,34 When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.</p> <p>Amos 9:15 “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.</p>	<p>does God intend to give which parts of the land? How will God return His selected land to the Jews? We cannot definitively sort those questions out.</p> <p>Notice that the bible speaks of both natives and foreigners dwelling in the land, that they are to be blessed and treated with justice and compassion. But in the end only God knows all the facts, only He decides.</p> <p>On my part, I must not support anything that seeks to take away land that God has given, or any action, faction, or movement that seeks to drive Israel from the land. <u>And</u> I also must not support arrogant, illegal, unjust or immoral ways of obtaining land for Israel.</p> <p>Declaration: <b><i>“I choose today to adopt a belief and an attitude of supporting the presence of Israel in the land through appropriate means. I choose to resist those who would unjustly remove Israel from their inheritance. I also choose to speak and work for kindness, acceptance, justice and peace for all people within the land.”</i></b></p>

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<p><b><i>There Will Be A Time When God Turns Again To Deal With Israel</i></b></p>	<p>Rom 11: 25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.</p> <p>Lk 21:24 ...and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.</p> <p>2 Pet 3:3,4,8,9 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.</p>	<p>There will be an end to the age of the gentiles. God will turn His attention to Israel and the completion of His plan. It is about giving justice to faithful followers of G_d who till this time, know not Messiah. Do not be deceived into thinking that things will continue on as they have forever. Do not become self-wise.</p> <p>There are many opinions about how this will happen, when it will happen, and who will be involved. Experts disagree.</p> <p>As in all the workings of God, He will choose individuals to play pivotal roles in His actions on the earth. It may be me. I want to be willing and ready. I want to go and flow with Him.</p> <p>Declaration: <b><i>“I choose to remain alert to the workings of God among His people Israel and others, and to the best of my ability and at His leading, to cooperate with His working in both intercession and support.”</i></b></p>
<p><b><i>There Will Be (Is) A Regathering Of Jews To The Land</i></b></p>	<p>Is 43:5,6 Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the West. I will say to the north, “Give them up!” and to the south, “Do not hold them back. Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth.”</p> <p>Is 11:11,12 Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. and He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.</p> <p>Eze 28:25, 26 Thus says the Lord GOD, “When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and will manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant Jacob. They will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards and live securely when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.”</p>	<p>The bible speaks of several waves or periods of the gathering of Jews to Israel from different countries or regions and under different compulsions. The modern regathering seems to have visibly begun with the establishment of the nation of Israel. The last will be after the final battle when gentiles will support and even bring Jews to the land (see below).</p> <p>But the point is this: it seems to be God's heart that some, or all, of the Jews have an attachment to the land and that many return to it at different times and in different ways.</p> <p>I should maintain an attitude that supports Jews returning to the land, and be sensitized</p>

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	<p>Jer 16:14-18  “Therefore behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when it will no longer be said, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the north and from all the countries where He had banished them.’ For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers.” “Behold, I am going to send for many fishermen,” declares the LORD, “and they will fish for them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them from every mountain and every hill and from the clefts of the rocks. For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity concealed from My eyes. I will first doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted My land; they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable idols and with their abominations.”</p> <p>Ez 36:22-24  Therefore say to the house of Israel, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.”</p>	<p>to God’s prompting to provide support to those wishing to return.</p> <p>Declaration:  <b><i>“I choose today to recognize that God’s heart is to regather many Jews to the land, to maintain an attitude in agreement with God’s stated intent, and to support God’s plan in any way He leads me – including financially and physically.”</i></b></p>
<p><b><i>All Nations Will Turn Against Israel In The End</i></b></p>	<p>Ez 38:15,16  You will come from your place out of the remote parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great assembly and a mighty army; and you will come up against My people Israel like a cloud to cover the land. It shall come about in the last days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I am sanctified through you before their eyes, O Gog.</p> <p>Joel 3:1,2  For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment 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.</p> <p>Zech 12:1-4  Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him, “Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.” “In that day,” declares the LORD, “I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.”</p>	<p>It is clear that world events will ripen to the place that many, if not all, nations will turn against Israel, and will seek to physically attack and destroy her. God intends to make Israel irresistibly “heavy” for nations and irresistibly attractive to invade. This is a signal of the imminent involvement of God in the severe judgment of all nations.</p> <p>It is inevitable that this will happen. It is God’s stated will – His sovereign choice. However I have a choice as to which side I am on and what I individually do. I do not want to be on wrong side of this one! I will not side with those judged, support them, nor go with them. This may mean taking specific actions to warn and resist evil leaders and evil plans on behalf of the Jews – and the nations about to be judged. It may mean aid to the helpless (see Ps. 41).</p> <p>Declaration:  <b><i>“I choose today to prepare my heart to resist in the evil day, and to work toward</i></b></p>

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	<p>Zech 14: 1,2 Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.</p>	<p><b><i>warning, rescue, and help in the time of Israel's trouble and to resist nations and individuals who counsel and act on the impulse to invade Israel."</i></b></p>
<p><b><i>A Remnant Of Jews Will Be Saved And Turn To Messiah</i></b></p>	<p>Rom 2:9-11 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.</p> <p>Mal 3:17, 18 "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.</p> <p>Is 10:20-22 Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant within them will return; a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.</p> <p>Zech 12:10-14 "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves; all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.</p> <p>Jer 31:31-34 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."</p>	<p>In God's turning to deal with Israel there <u>may</u> be great destruction among the Jews and in Israel. It is clear there <u>will</u> be a remnant who will experience deep repentance, revival, and salvation. It will result in great life and benefit for all peoples.</p> <p>Who will that remnant be? Has the destruction already happened historically? If not, when will it happen? What should Christians do about it? There is lots of theory, lots of disagreement. However God does seem to indicate that those who are faithful to Him will be among the remnant – and His past dealings in history indicate that this is His common way: to treat those who have faithfully sought Him with mercy.</p> <p>As in most things there is an on-the-ground infrastructure that is to be set up. Maybe it is even happening now. I want to be <u>actively</u> available to God to be used in this. There are many needs, and many active in this endeavor, including strong ongoing efforts both inside and outside Israel to turn the Jewish heart to her Messiah. There is great "ground floor" opportunity!</p> <p>Declaration: <b><i>"I choose today to actively support efforts to turn Israel to G_d and to Messiah and to be personally actively available to be used by God in this vital kingdom area."</i></b></p>

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	<p>Hos 3:5 Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days.</p> <p>Rom 11:15,26,27 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? And so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."</p> <p>Matt 23:37-39 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"</p>	
<p><b>God Will Make His Children Into One Flock</b></p>	<p>Gen 12:3 ... and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.</p> <p>Jn 10:16 I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.</p> <p>Eph 2:14,15 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace</p> <p>Col 3:10,11 ...and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him - a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.</p> <p>Rom 3:29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also.</p> <p>Rev 21:10-14 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God... It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.</p>	<p>God has stated His intent to make all believers into one new man. Like everything else, this is an area of tangled debate. Is it a "Jewish man," a "Christian man," or a whole hybrid "new" man? Who is grafted into what? Are the Jews the root, the stump, or just branches in the vine that is Christ? Is it just a spiritual unity or more than that? There are lots of mixed metaphors and combined scriptures put forward as proof texts.</p> <p>One thing we do know it is a "new" man and unity in and under Jesus is this new man's chief characteristic. I want to cooperate with God in this, both now and in the future. He is all about unity in the Holy Spirit and demonstrated that unity in the early church in Acts (2:37-47). As with Paul, He can make enemies into blood brothers.</p> <p>Declaration: <b><i>"I choose today to work for unity among all believers without regard to race, and to actively promote unity under Jesus among all."</i></b></p>

Essential Truth	Scriptural Text(s)	Brief Discussion/ Personal Application
<p><b>Jesus Will Physically Rule From Jerusalem</b></p>	<p>Zech 2:10-12          “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD. Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.</p> <p>Is 11:10          Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious.</p> <p>Micah 4:1-3          And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, “Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths.” For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war.</p> <p>Zech 8:20          Thus says the LORD of hosts, “It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go.’ So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”</p> <p>Zech 14:16,17          Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.</p> <p>Rev 20:6-9          Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection... but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth.... And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.</p>	<p>Many nations, one Lord, dwelling in and ruling from Jerusalem. There is an indication that all nations will recognize Jesus as Lord, and that He dwells in Jerusalem. It will be necessary to come to worship Him and perhaps celebrate the Feast of Booths (if you want rain that is)!</p> <p>This is often considered the millennial reign of Christ on earth – 1,000 years of peace ended by a final rebellion among some of the nations.</p> <p>There is, like always, some diversity of opinion about this, even among pre-millennialists. Is <u>this</u> the time when all nations come against Israel and not before? Who will reign? Will the Holy Spirit still dwell within men?</p> <p>While this is potentially a long way off, scripture does indicate that certain ones will reign with Christ (Rev 20:4 – the entrance is tough!). When we consider parables of the kingdom, such as the stories of the minas and the talents, we see that the reward and the ruling will happen <u>after</u> Christ's return. So...</p> <p>I want to so prepare my heart, and my generations, that we are among those who welcome Christ, submit joyfully to His rule, and even reign with Him if so called.</p> <p>Declaration:  <b><i>“I choose today to commit my heart to welcome the return and rule of Christ from Jerusalem, and to position my heart and that of my generations to be found worthy to rule with Him if chosen.”</i></b></p>

Essential Truth	Scriptural Text(s)	Brief Discussion/ Personal Application
<b><i>Attitudes and Actions For All Believers</i></b>		
<b><i>Comfort And Be Compassionate Toward Israel</i></b>	<p>Isa 40:1,2  “Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God. “Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.”</p> <p>Isa 49:14-16  But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me.” Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.</p>	<p>In the end it is a heart issue.</p> <p>What is the condition of my heart concerning God’s plans and His attitude toward Israel? He wants it to be one of compassion, of comfort, of love. I can take my lead from Paul in Romans 9-11 who would die if he could win his brethren. I owe them a debt of love.</p> <p>I can share with our Maker the longing for this people and all who trust him in the Middle East, the compassion, the pain. I can ask God to change my heart.</p> <p>Declaration:  <b><i>“I choose today to ask You Lord to give me a heart of compassion toward Jews individually and toward Israel collectively. I open myself to have Your heart.”</i></b></p>
<b><i>Demonstrate An Intimate Love Relationship With Father God and Messiah</i></b>	<p>Rom 11:11  I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.</p> <p>Rom 11:14  ...if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?</p> <p>Rom 11:18  ...do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.</p>	<p>In the end it will not be doctrinal correctness nor an arrogant “I told you so” attitude that will win Jews to Messiah. It will not be proselytizing to Christianity that will bring many of the sons of Israel into the kingdom of G_d. Paul says it will be a provocation to jealousy when they observe and experience the joy, love and exuberance of believers in Jesus. Paul says our relationship is to provoke, not anger, shame or debate, but jealousy. It is in humble selfless service, not arrogance, and in demonstrated intimacy with God that will break down resistance to, and misunderstandings about, God.</p> <p>Declaration:  <b><i>“I choose today to demonstrate the love of God and of Messiah, and to do so with service, humility, gentleness, and joy.”</i></b></p>

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<p><b>Pray For Israel</b></p>	<p>Jer 31:7 For thus says the LORD, "Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise and say, 'O LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel.'"</p> <p>Ps 122:6-9 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. May peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces." For the sake of my brothers and my friends, I will now say, "May peace be within you." For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.</p> <p>Is 62:6,7 On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and give Him no rest until He establishes And makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.</p>	<p>This is both an obvious one and a tricky one! What shall I pray? What if God is driving things toward conclusion and I find myself wanting to pray against that?</p> <p>I can look at the current events and hold them before God asking Him how best to pray. He will bring things to our attention, He will bring energy, emotion and passion in certain areas. Like the men of Issachar we are to know the times (1 Ch 12;32).</p> <p>And I can <u>always</u> pray and declare, even to the chief nations, "save Your people Lord; may they prosper who love You; make Jerusalem a praise in the earth!"</p> <p>Declaration: <b><i>"I choose today to pray for Israel and for God's plan for her and for the world through her. I will listen for instructions and then pray with faith."</i></b></p>
<p><b>Share Materially With Israel</b></p>	<p>Rom 15:27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them (Jews) also in material things.</p> <p>1 Cor 9:11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?</p> <p>Gal 6:6 The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.</p> <p>Rom 9:4,5 ...who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.</p>	<p>It is very clear in scripture that I am to bless those who have sown spiritually into me. While the immediate application is individual to individual, Paul makes it clear that it is also gentile to Jew.</p> <p>I should seek to give in ways that will promote God's stated plans, that will draw Jews to Messiah, that will comfort and serve. There are many selfless and worthy individuals and organizations doing great things in Israel and elsewhere. There are significant special projects underway and planned. I can pray and give!</p> <p>Declaration: <b><i>"I choose today to give and to worthy causes, institutions and individuals who promote Your ways Lord and Your actions."</i></b></p>