

The Battle for Israel Pt 2

by Billy Strachan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's plan for Israel and the church, and the consequences of not obeying God's plan.

Duration: 1:05:38

Scripture: Genesis 17:8, Exodus 6:8, Psalm 105:8-11, Matthew 7:21, Luke 13:23-28, Acts 17:26, Hebrews 6:17-18

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the theme of the end times and its relevance to all professing Christians. He refers to Matthew 24, where Jesus talks about the signs of the end of the age and the beginning of sorrows. The speaker emphasizes that believers will face tribulation and persecution for their faith, but they should remain on God's side. He also highlights the concept of predestination, stating that God has a plan for each individual's life and that believers should trust in His sovereignty. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the importance of a small piece of territory, Canaan, and suggests that both God and the devil attach great significance to it.

Transcript

There has been a tradition in the church over many centuries which has no basis in Scripture. I suppose some of you would admit there are other traditions in the church which have no basis in Scripture. I think it's important to bear in mind that when Jesus came with his message, I think the main opposition to his message came from people who had traditions that were not in line with God's word.

This tradition that I spoke about this morning gives the name Israel to the church. I was looking back and thinking of the time when I was preaching here in London in the 1950s and I remember I had a beautiful authorized version, big pages and margins. And for instance all the latter chapters of Isaiah, they would be headed like God's gracious promise to the church.

Although in actual fact the church wasn't mentioned and the promises were given to Israel. And I realize how deep-seated this is in our thinking that the church is really Israel today. I believe that has no basis whatever in Scripture.

And I tried to show you this morning out of the Scriptures that it is not true. It's very simple. Actually truth is usually simple.

The truth is Israel is the, is Israel and the church is the church. And I believe God is not so poor that if he keeps his promises to the church he'll have to break his promises to Israel. There is a kind of understanding that well Israel had their chance but they were unfaithful and they failed God.

Which is certainly true in the large proportion. So now God has changed his mind and the promises given to Israel are now for the church. I don't think that goes far enough.

Because when I consider the history of the church in the light of Scripture and in the light of all that God has made available to the church. I'm always left wondering who has been more unfaithful Israel or the church. It seems to me if God could change his mind about his promises to Israel and take their name and give it to some other group.

God could just as well change his mind about his promises to the church and take that title and give it to some other group. So this is really a very important issue for all of us. Because in the last resort our confidence in God's mercy is based on his commitments in his word and on his covenants.

And if God can change those commitments and break those covenants. I feel we're left with no security whatever as Christians. In other words it's a very far-reaching issue.

It doesn't only concern Israel. But it also concerns those of us who are not Israelites but have come to God through the new covenant in Jesus. The second thing that I tried to deal with this morning was the destiny of Israel.

And I referred just by way of a sort of starting point to an article published very recently here in Britain by a charismatic Anglican clergyman who is a friend of mine. In which he essentially followed the line that I have sketched out and was very condemnatory of Israel. And suggested really that God's commitment to give the land to them was no longer relevant.

I have to be careful what I say. After all I am an Anglican of a kind myself. Anybody here baptized and confirmed.

I was baptized and confirmed by no less a person than the Bishop of Oxford. Now that's my confirmation not my baptism. But in a way I want to say without being uncharitable.

In view of all that's been happening and the public statements made by prominent Anglicans in the last few years. I think it would be more appropriate for the Anglican Church to confess its own sins to God. And let Israel confess their sins.

I feel that would have a greater impact on God. I gave you about half a dozen specific clear promises taken from the prophets of Israel. That promised the full restoration of Israel to their land and to God's favor.

I always put it in that order because I see in the scripture that God brings them back to the land unredeemed, not in faith. In order that he may deal with them there. That was stated in the Prophet Hosea.

In the place where it was said to them you are not my people. In that place it will be said you are the sons of the Living God. The place where it was said you are not my people, was the land of Israel.

Consequently their restoration and their acceptance by God, likewise has to take place in the land of Israel. I pointed out that no matter how black a picture we may paint of Israel. And that's not difficult.

It doesn't require great cleverness to do that. Any more than it takes great cleverness to point out the faults of the church. When I was a young preacher, I delighted in pointing out all the faults and inconsistencies of the church.

That was a favorite theme of mine. But I came to realize it doesn't do much good. It really doesn't help very much.

It accomplishes very little that's positive. And it doesn't require cleverness to point out the faults of the Christian Church. Anybody can do it.

And I think it takes no more cleverness to point out the faults of Israel. I think the prophets of Israel did a much more thorough job depicting the sins of Israel than any of us have ever been able to do since. But the same prophets that depicted the sins of Israel with such clarity, are also the ones who predicted with such clarity the total restoration of Israel.

But I pointed out this morning that the scripture reveals the Israel that will be restored is a remnant that has been preserved by the grace of God. Now in this particular article that was, that I quoted, and I'm sure some of you have seen it. Reference was made to a passage of Paul in Romans chapter 9 verses 4 and 5. Speaking about the Israelites, Paul says, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises.

And the writer of this article said God speaks or Paul speaks there of the covenants and the promises. But he makes no mention of the land. I find that a rather misleading statement.

Because as I've already pointed out, there are countless references to the land in the promises. So if the promises are for Israel, then the land is for Israel. And furthermore God has specifically committed himself with the utmost clarity by covenant to give that land.

So when it says there's no mention of the land, that is misleading if the conclusion is therefore the land is no longer for Israel. Because the land is included both in the promises and in the covenants. Now I want to give you one specific passage of Scripture which states the covenant of God.

In which he is totally committed to give the land back to Israel. That's Psalm 105 verses 7 through 11. As a matter of fact, in a sense, God has never taken the land from Israel.

And in the prophets, whether they're in the land or whether are out of the land. It is always called their land. It's as much their land when they are not there, as it is when they are.

Psalm 105. I will begin at verse 7. To me this is like the title deeds to a property. And those of you that have ever purchased a property or been involved in that.

You know the title deeds have to be very specific. The exact name of the person has to be given and so on. Well to me, these verses are the title deeds of the land of Canaan.

I want you to listen while I read, see if you agree with me. Verse 7, he is the Lord our God. His judgments are in all the earth.

In other words, when God pronounces judgments, they are valid, they're in force, in the whole earth. Because he is the God of the whole earth. He's not just the God of one nation or one little piece of the earth.

He has remembered his covenant forever. The word which he commanded for a thousand generations. The covenant which he made with Abraham and his oath to Isaac and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute.

To Israel for an everlasting covenant. I don't know of any passage in Scripture where so many words are brought together so closely. All of which indicate God's total commitment to do something.

Let's just go through those words for a moment. In verse 8, he has remembered his covenant forever. It's a permanent covenant.

The word which he commanded, it's his word. It's also his command for a thousand generations. The covenant again which he made with Abraham and his oath to Isaac.

Notice again the word oath. Now the writer of Hebrews tells us why God gives his oath. His word is sufficient.

But he says that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. We should have strong confidence. So first God gives his word and then he gives his oath.

And in those he's given us two immutable things. Two things that cannot change. In order that we might have strong confidence.

And then he says it confirmed it to Jacob for a statute. And to Israel for an everlasting covenant. It begins and ends with a permanent covenant.

Let's just glance at the other words for a moment. It is the most amazing passage of Scripture. I'm astonished that God would go to such lengths, in language, to affirm his total unreserved commitment.

He says in verse 8 it's his covenant. It's his word. It's his commandment.

And then he says in verse 9 it's his oath. And in verse 10 it's a statute. And finally an everlasting covenant.

Now what is all this about? If your Bible is like mine and it probably isn't. You have to turn the page to find out what it's all about. What if I may say so, is God so tremendously concerned about? What is he making such, taking such pains to make absolutely clear his total commitment? What is it all to do with? You have to read the next verse.

Saying to you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance. What is all that about? A little piece of territory at the east end of the Mediterranean. Isn't that amazing? I mean I never read that passage without being amazed.

That Almighty God, the creator of the whole universe, the King of the earth, has gone to such lengths to assert the destiny of a little piece of territory at the east end of the Mediterranean. God must attach much more importance to it than most of us imagine. I believe that's true.

And I'll tell you somebody else who attaches a lot of importance to it. And that is the devil. That's why we are in the midst of a tremendous conflict.

Now I said that in a title deed you have to specify the exact name and identity of the person involved in the deed. See how very careful God is here to make sure that we know to whom the land is committed. Because he says, in verse 10 the covenant with him which he made with Abraham and his oath to Isaac and confirmed it to Jacob to Israel for an everlasting covenant.

So the, the covenant goes from Abraham through Isaac not to Ishmael but to Jacob whose name became Israel. I suggest that you have to have what I would call a theological squint. If you can't see what that's saying.

I don't know how God could have said it more clearly and with more emphasis. And I have to say reverently I think it's somewhat insulting to God to suggest that he doesn't know how to say what he means. That's the implication.

If we raise any questions about the meaning of that we're saying God I know you said it but I don't think you really mean what you said. Which is a position personally I would not wish to take in relationship to God. So let's just get this very clear when Paul said the promises and the covenants belong to Israel.

He was saying in many different ways the land is eternally given to Israel. Now do I have somebody here with an NIV? Are you an NIV reader? You are. The what? Oh nearly indispensable that's right thank you I understand.

All right I just want to read one verse in the NIV from Acts chapter 17 verse 26. I appreciate the NIV but I don't use it myself all the time. Because I'm so used to the old authorized version that I whenever I quote from memory I quote it and the new King James is close enough that there's no obvious gap to be bridged.

However in my radio programs I regularly use the NIV. Because when people are cooking in the kitchen or driving a car you need to use a version which they can get the meaning of easily without any having to do any kind of reasoning. So Paul is talking to the men of Athens and he says in Acts 17 verse 26.

Trouble with your Bible is the print is too small for my eyes. But anyhow verse 26 from one man God made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth and he determines that he determined the time set for them and the exact places where they should live. Did you know that? The God of the whole earth has a plan for every national group.

He's determined the exact places where they should live and the times when they should get to those places. So God has not merely got a place for Israel but he's got a place for every nation. But there's just one important thing to bear in mind.

The place he has for Israel is not offered to any other nation. Now God has a place for the Arabs. As a matter of fact they have more than 400 times as much territory as Israel.

When the original commitment was made by the Balfour Declaration to give a certain area to Israel. Many people don't realize it included the whole of what is now Jordan. But Winston Churchill by a stroke of the British pen in 1922 assigned that to an Arab state where no Jews are allowed to live.

And by that once one act 76% of the total area that was originally appointed for a Jewish national home was given to Arabs and Jews were no longer permitted to live there. So we're talking now when we talk about the rest of that territory. It's only 24% of the original inheritance.

However I don't think that God bows to the decrees of even Winston Churchill. So I believe things are going to take a different course. But it's very important to remember that God has a place for every nation and a time for them to be there.

Thank you. Now I believe that at the beginning of this century God's time came for the Jewish people to go back to their own land. There's some very significant dates like 1897 the first Zionist World Conference.

And probably 1917 in some ways when one of the most significant years. Because in that year Jerusalem was liberated by General Allenby from 400 years of Turkish domination. The Balfour Declaration was issued by the British government.

And the first officially atheist state in history came into being. That is Soviet Russia. And all those are in one way or another very closely related to God's program to close this age.

Now I think as we look at history we find it very clear that the Jews for the most part really didn't want to go back to that land. There was a minority that were eagerly committed to it. But it was not ever a majority.

And had it been left to the Jews themselves very few would have returned. But when God wants something to happen he has his ways of getting it to happen. And we all need to bear this in mind.

So when God's time came as I understand it, this is my interpretation, God permitted the Holocaust. Because it was the only thing that would have uprooted the Jewish communities from Europe. Where they had lived and settled for hundreds of years.

And forced them back to their own land. And of course the agony and the suffering involved in that is more than the human mind can easily comprehend. It included the death of six million Jews.

What I'm suggesting to you is that if God was that ruthless, if I can use the word ruthless, in getting Israel back to the land he had appointed for them. How will God deal with other nations? You see if it took the Holocaust to get the Jews back to their land in a small measure. And remember there are still far more Jews in the United States than there are in Israel.

I'm asking myself if other nations are out of their appointed place. What will it take to get them back? Beyond that I'm asking the question. I believe God loves the Jews with an eternal love.

I believe he will never forsake them and he will ultimately accomplish his purpose for them. But six million perished. Now here's a question and it's for you to determine how you answer it.

I believe God loves the church with an everlasting love. I believe he has a plan for the church. Which is a plan of tremendous blessing and privileges.

But I believe also that at the present time a great part of the professing church is not in any way submitted to God's plan or walking in it. Now if God used the Holocaust to get Israel where he wanted them. What do you think that God might use to get the church doing what he's commanded the church to do? Because I would have to say the command to the church to proclaim this gospel of the kingdom in all the world and to make disciples of all nations was not given to five percent of the church.

It was given to the whole church. My personal feeling is that if the church doesn't do it one way. God will get the church to do it another way.

I tell the Christians of the United States if you don't witness to the people of Russia and you have plenty of opportunity to do it. God may permit the Russians to move into the United States and then you have to witness to them. I am very much in earnest my question is.

Is it going to take another Holocaust to get the church obeying God? I don't know the answer. But I could easily believe that's what's going to happen. I'd like to turn for a moment to Romans chapter 2. Just to bring out a principle.

Romans chapter 2 beginning at verse 6 which says. God will render to each one according to his deeds. Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory honor and immortality.

But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness indignation and wrath tribulation and anguish on every soul of man who does evil of the Jew first and also of the Greek or the Gentile. But glory honor and peace to everyone who works what is good to the Jew first and also to the Greek or to the Gentile. You'll notice there's an order.

Both blessing and judgment go in a certain order. To the Jew first and then to the Gentile. Now when I consider the history of the Holocaust.

I have to say if that happened to the Jews. What is going to happen to the Gentile? Now I don't have the answer. But I'm inclined to think it's very very different from most people's anticipation.

I think we're dealing with an extremely serious issue which has received comparatively little attention from most of the church. I sometimes surprise my Jewish friends when I say I'm on your side with certain qualifications. And they kind of are surprised that anybody wouldn't be on their side.

And they say why? And I say because I want to be on the winning side. It's not the way that they're used to being talked to. But you see I'm quite convinced they're going to win.

I'm quite convinced the church is going to win. But it's going to have to go through a lot to make it ready to win. Now I want to deal with just two more issues.

I pointed out that God's dealings with Israel are the expression of his sovereign decision not made on the basis of work. And Paul emphasizes this very clearly. God rejected Esau and chose Jacob while they were still in the womb.

In order that it might be totally evident in all his dealings. That the basis of God's dealings with nations is his sovereign choice. Now people tend to object to that.

When it's somebody else who's chosen. But the truth of the matter is if we accept the New Testament. The message it has for Christians.

Exactly the same is true of every Christian. We are Christians not because we chose God. But because God chose us.

This is an error of emphasis in much contemporary teaching. We're left with a feeling that salvation depends on us doing something and making the right decisions. Really that's a secondary issue.

What salvation depends on is the decision which God has already made. And furthermore God made that decision before he created the world. You see a lot of Christians would be a lot less insecure and

unsettled.

If they could realize they're the product of a plan that was conceived in eternity before creation ever took place. That's clearly stated. In other words the same principle of divine election.

Which we have seen applied to Israel. Applies exactly as much to the church. God has no other principle.

God is never going to do anything that he hasn't initially decided to do. Now I am aware that this doctrine can be carried to extremes. Like the story of the Presbyterian brother who fell down the stairs.

Broke his leg and said I'm glad that's over. However to press this truth to the extreme and to ignore it. I think it's probably better to have it in the extreme than to have it ignored.

Although I don't agree with that. You know there was a great revival in the Hebrides in 1948. And I had a sister in my congregation here in London whose family came from there.

And she said in the Hebrides you don't offer Christ to the sinner. People simply seek to discover whether they are among the elect. Which in a sense you know is what you discover.

But it's not balanced. But I believe there is a greater imbalance in totally ignoring the element of God's sovereignty and his divine choice. Then there is an over emphasizing it.

I think there's a lot of superficiality and cockiness and presumption in the charismatic movement. Because we haven't realized where our salvation comes from. I'm just going to take a few minutes to bring to your attention scriptures directed to Christians.

Which clearly assert this. Let's begin in John 15 verse 16. Jesus is speaking to his apostles.

And he says you did not choose me but I chose you. And appointed you that you should go and bear fruit. That your fruit should remain that whatsoever you ask the Father in my name he may give it to you.

Personally I believe every appointment of any validity ever made in the church must be God's choice. I believe the appointments that are made by man's choice will never accomplish God's purpose. But I also believe that those who are appointed by God's choice will bear fruit that will remain.

I think the key to remaining fruit, enduring fruit, is operating on the basis of God's choice. I don't believe the church is a democracy. I don't believe elections are the way to discover God's choice.

They may do sometimes by a happy accident. But the authority of the church comes from above. And every significant appointment or place or office or ministry or function in the church has to be based on the fact that God made the choice.

You see when I unfold this truth what a revolution is in store for the church. Now I personally believe that revolution is coming. Because God is going to have his way.

The question for you and me is not whether there'll be a revolution. But which side we'll be on. And I would rather be on God's side.

Then look in Romans chapter 8 verses 29 and 30. For whom God foreknew, he also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover whom he predestinated, those he also called.

And whom he called, those he also justified. And whom he justified, those he also glorified. There's a whole succession of verbs in the past tense.

But it starts with God's foreknowledge. And on the basis of his foreknowledge, he predestined us. My definition of that is you are not an accident looking for somewhere to happen.

God worked out the course of your life before creation took place or history began. I'm glad he did. Because I'm very sure that I would have made of a mess of it.

If I, if God had left it to me. Now if you go to 1st Peter chapter 1, you get one further stage in this process. You have to put a number of different scriptures together to get the whole process.

Peter, 1st Peter chapter 1 verses 1 & 2. Incidentally the translation of these two verses is another example of Gentile prejudice obscuring things that reply to Jews. Because it says here in my translation Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to the pilgrims of the dispersion. You know what the word dispersion is in Greek? Diaspora.

What does diaspora indicate? It's the official Jewish word for Jews living outside of the land of Israel. So this epistle is addressed primarily to Jewish believers. You are aware that there are four epistles in the New Testament addressed primarily to Jewish believers.

Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter. I imagine that the majority of Gentile Christians read those without ever realizing to whom they were addressed. James says to the twelve tribes scattered abroad.

Twelve tribes of what? Tell me. Israel, that's right. All right now having gone over that hurdle.

We're to the, to the pilgrims or the strangers of the diaspora in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Now he describes them. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.

Elect, modern English chosen. So first of all God foreknew us. On the basis of his foreknowledge he chose us.

Very important to know that God didn't make an arbitrary choice. Every person he chose, he chose on the basis of the knowledge of what he could make of that person. That's good news for you.

Because if God has called you to be something, he determined that from eternity. And it's no good saying God I can't do it. Because God said I knew you before it creation took place.

And because I knew you, I chose you. And because I've chosen you, I've predestined you. I've arranged the course of your life today.

Now I want you to know that all those three things. God's foreknowledge, his choice and his predestination, all took place before creation ever happened. What a different perspective that gives to us in our Christian life.

We're not something that suddenly popped up in the stream of time. We're the expression of a divine plan from eternity. If you could grasp that, many of you would be much less nervous and anxious than you are.

I'm serious about that. I find insecurity is such a powerful force in the lives of so many Christians. Probably in many cases, simply because we don't realize the security of our background.

We're part of a divine plan that God conceived before he ever brought creation into being. All right let's look in Ephesians chapter 1 verses 3 through 6. Now Ephesians is addressed primarily to Gentile Christians, not exclusively. Blessed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world. When did he choose us? Before the foundation of the world. That we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

I tell you if God hadn't chosen me to be holy and without blame. There's no way I could ever be it. It depends on God's choice.

Not on my best efforts to get holiness. Having predestined us to adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to himself. According to the good pleasure of his will.

So we have, he has chosen us and predestined us. Who's us? Us is we isn't it? All right so this difficult doctrine of divine election is not exclusively applied to Israel. It's applied to the entire Christian Church.

We are on exactly the same footing as they are. The truth of the matter is we find it difficult sometimes to believe that God could choose Jews. Tell you something they find it even more difficult to believe that God could choose Gentiles.

And if you ask them for reasons they can keep you listening for hours. Well they give you good reasons. Actually I think the Bible does indicate it was more extraordinary that God would choose Gentiles than he would choose Jews.

Because after all Paul says the Jews are the natural branches. We're the wild olive branches. Those of us who are Gentiles.

I remember there are Jews here. And let's look also just in Ephesians chapter 1 while we're there in verses 11 and 12. Speaking about in Christ Paul says in whom also we have obtained an inheritance.

Being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will. Well that's, that's a relief isn't it? We're part of a plan conceived by a God who works everything after the counsel of his will. In other words whatever God plans is going to happen.

Stop being so anxious relax and let God do it. I think one of the great enemies of true holiness is religious activity. I've been teaching on Romans lately and it's got very deep into me.

Listen the key to Christian success is not effort it's union. Jesus said I am the vine you are the branches. Have you ever known a vine branch making a big effort to produce grapes? It's ridiculous.

Why does the branch produce grapes? Because the sap rises up through the trunk into the branches. In that little simple parable we have a beautiful picture of the three persons of the Godhead. The Father is the vine dresser.

Jesus is the vine and the Holy Spirit is what? The sap. That's right and let me say in parentheses. This has got nothing to do with my message.

But I've learned the hard way. God is the vine dresser. Don't let people try to prune you.

Now I'll take this comparison between Israel and the church one step further. And I'll ask a question. I've pointed out that the elect in Israel will be a remnant.

A remnant who will have gone through a very intensive process of making them what God intended them to be. Do you think that the church is going to go the same way? Is it possible that God has in view a remnant in the church who will be truly his? It's a very important question isn't it? Because it concerns every one of us practically. Let me give you just one or two scriptures that suggest that.

Turn to Luke chapter 13 verses 23 to 28. Luke 13 verses 23 to 28. Then someone said to him Jesus Lord are there few who are saved? That's an important question.

And he said to them strive to enter through the narrow gate. For many I say to you will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen up and shut the door.

And you begin to stand outside and knock at the door saying Lord Lord open for us. And he will answer and say to you I do not know you where you are from. Then they will begin to say we ate and drank in your presence.

You toured in our streets. But he will say I tell you I do not know you where you are from. Depart from me all you workers of iniquity lawlessness or rebellion.

And in Matthew chapter 7 at the close of the Sermon on the Mount. He gives a similar warning. Matthew the 7th chapter beginning at verse 21.

Not everyone who says to me Lord Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven. But he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day Lord Lord have we not prophesied in your name.

Cast out demons in your name and done many wonders in your name. They were lying or do you think they'd really done those things? I personally believe they'd done all those things. In other words being able to do those things is not a passport to heaven.

Now I want you to notice this answer. Then I will declare to them I never knew you. Depart from me you who practice lawlessness.

In other words you were never on the list from eternity. I never knew you. Whom he foreknew he chose.

Whom he chose he predestined. You see we're going back to an eternal plan. And then in Matthew 24 I hope you understand that though this the theme of this meeting is Israel.

What we're saying is extremely relevant to all professing Christians. Now in Matthew 24 we have Jesus answer about what will be the sign of the end of the age and so on. And he says in verse 8 all these are the beginning of sorrows.

I spoke yesterday about the the regeneration, the rebirth of creation. Here are the labor pains which indicate the rebirth is about to take place. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation.

Who's you? You is who? Us. That's right that's not good English. But it's it's the way it is.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you. And you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. Do you any of you have those little boxes of promises people used to have? You know you dip in

and you pick out a card.

And I just wonder whether anybody's got that verse in their promise box. Then many will be offended, will betray one another and will hate one another. Many who? Come on I didn't hear you.

Christians that's right. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound the love of many will grow cold.

The love of many who? Christians right. That's the Greek word there is agape. It will grow cold because of abounding lawlessness.

But he who endures to the end shall be saved. Seems to me, even as I stand here this evening. That there's a very very close parallel.

Much closer than most of us have appreciated. Between God's purpose and dealing with Israel. His purpose and dealing with the church.

In each case it comes out of divine foreknowledge, divine choice, divine predestination. And the end result is going to be a people such as God wants. And he's going to put that people through many different kinds of experiences and tests.

To make them what he wants them to be. And those who stand the tests will be his people. That seems to me clear.

Now I could go to Romans 11 to where he warns the Gentile branches. Well perhaps we should read that because it's relevant. Romans chapter 11 verse 17 and following.

He's talking about the olive tree which has as its roots Abraham Isaac and Jacob. Which grew up as God's people Israel. And then he says and if some of the branches were broken off.

And you being a wild olive tree were grafted in among them. And with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Bearing in mind that it's contrary to nature to graft a wild branch into a good tree.

Normally grafting is you, you graft the good branch into the wild tree. So that the strength of the wild tree goes into bringing forth fruit from the good branch. So this is contrary to nature.

And I being a Gentile I'm deeply grateful to God that he went to that. He took those pains to get me in. I also realize that when I came in as a Gentile.

In many ways my attitudes, my traditions. I was very much out of harmony with the tree itself. I'm amazed at God's grace that he was so patient with me.

And still is patient with me I'd like to say. Thank him. Then he goes on to say now this is the message to the wild olive branches.

Do not boast against the branches. But if you boast remember that you do not support the root. But the root supports you.

You will say then branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off.

And you stand by faith. Do not be haughty but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches.

He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God. On those who fell, severity.

But toward you goodness, if you continue in his goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. That's very clear isn't it.

It leaves no room for pride, or presumption, or carelessness. It's a strong warning to us. Now I've done my best.

And we don't have much time left. But I've done my best to kind of give you a, a scriptural basis. For what prayer for Israel stands for.

And of course not only prayer for Israel. Because there are all over the earth. There are groups of Christians of non-jewish background.

Whose hearts God has touched. With the sense of responsibility to pray for the restoration of Israel. I was talking to brother Lance Lambert.

Who's a good friend of ours. And he was, had been in Singapore. He may have told you this.

I don't know. And he said he met a man there. A Chinese, no a non-Chinese man.

Who'd been into China. And amongst the Christians there. And he'd been there in a time when they were praying.

And he said one Chinese Christian man stood up. And began to pray. And as he was praying in Chinese.

This man had no idea what he was praying about. But his, he was so intensely moved. This Chinese Christian by his prayers.

That the tears were spouting out of his eyes. And his, the whole front of his t-shirt was drenched. And so this man turned to another Chinese who spoke English.

And said what's he praying for? And he said he's praying for Israel. Now that's totally supernatural. Because they really have no way of getting the real information about Israel.

They have very little Bible teaching. So when I talk about prayer for Israel. I'm just grateful to God for prayer for Israel.

Which I think is an outstanding achievement of God. But I want to make it plain that there are many, many other groups, in many, many other nations. Who have supernaturally received the same burden that you people have here.

And my aim has been in a sense, to try and dispel some of the smokescreens. That the devil has caused to blow over this whole issue of Israel. Their identity and their destiny.

And to present it to you in a clear and scriptural way. I trust I've been successful. Now very briefly as I close.

Let me try to answer a question. Which I've written in my outline. In the light of all that I've been saying.

How shall we respond? What should our response be? And first of all I'd like to turn you to Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 35. Hebrews 10 35. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.

I think one of the things that Satan is trying to do at the moment. By many different instruments and channels. Is to shake the confidence of people concerned and praying for Israel.

That God really means what he says. That he's really going to do what he says. I think there are smokescreens deliberately manufactured by Satan.

To cover up the real truth. But I want to suggest to you. Don't take your focus off the Word of God.

That's the only reliable source of information concerning Israel and the Middle East. Ruth and I living there. I think we have agreed with each other.

That we would not survive spiritually. If we ever let anything take our focus off the scriptures. And there are many many forces at work that would be directed to that aim.

So when in doubt go back to your Bible. And do not cast away the confidence which God has given you. Because he's worthy of our confidence.

In fact what some of you are going through may well be the process of sifting. Which is going to make you part of God's, I preached myself into something this evening you know that. I've never used that phrase about the church before.

But as I stand here it seems to me very clear. The true church will be a chosen remnant. And some of you are going through the testings that will determine whether you're there or not.

Now having said that I would like to turn you to one passage in Jeremiah. Which has been a light for me for many years. Jeremiah 31 verse 7. Remember what Peter said.

He said we should give heed to prophecy. As a light that shines in a dark place. So when you're in the dark.

Produced by the world's media and all the confusion and ignorance and foolishness and darkness that's in the world. Turn to the prophetic word of God. Because it's a light that shines in a dark place.

Now Jeremiah 31 is one of the great chapters predicting the regathering and restoration of Israel. And in this context God says in verse 7. Thus says the Lord sing 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. I believe those are God's directions for how we should respond to the message that I've been bringing.

And God says there are three things that are appropriate. Jubilant praise, proclamation and prayer. Now I was delighted with the praise that went before my message.

But I want if possible that we should have take a little time as soon as I close. To do it on the basis of this scripture. Which says sing with gladness for Jacob.

Shout among the chief of the nations. That's very jubilant, overflowing, noisy praise. Whoever said that God was embarrassed by noise.

Psalm 8 too says that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. God has ordained strength which is perfected praise. That he might silence the enemy and the avenger.

When we really praise God the way he wants to be praised. We stop Satan's mouth. I love the French translation of that.

I was speaking in Lausanne some years ago with a French interpreter. And when I understand French and I discovered that the French translation says this kind of praise imposes silence on the enemy and the avenger. What a blessed thought that we can impose silence on Satan.

We can stop his mouth. How? By praise. I think I must tell you this it happened years ago here in London.

When I was pastoring this little congregation. We had, my first wife and I Lydia and I were friends with two Russian Jewesses. Who had marvelously encountered the Messiah inside Soviet Russia and had escaped.

And who came first of all to Israel where they met us. Then came to London. Well they were in our living room one day in Westbourne Grove.

And we were really whooping it up. I mean we were praising the Lord and they said in Russia the Baptists make as much noise as the Pentecostals make in Britain. And there was a ring at the doorbell and I went down and there was a member of my congregation, a lady with a man in tow.

Whom she was leading by the hand and she took my breath away. She said this is my husband he's just come out of prison. He has a demon he needs deliverance.

Well in those days I didn't know what to do with the demon. I mean I had no idea what to do with the demon. But I couldn't turn the lady away.

So I said come up we're praying. So very diffidently and unwillingly this man came into the room and we just went on praying. And these Russian sisters they didn't bother a least bit about the man.

They were just praising God. And after a while he sidled up to me quietly and he said I'm going there's too much noise here. And God inspired me.

I don't claim any credit for the answer. But I said to him listen the one who doesn't like the noise is Satan. Because we're praising Jesus and he always hates that.

Now you've got two options. If you go now the devil will go with you. If you stay he'll go without you.

So he said I'll stay. And about ten minutes later he sidled up to me again and he said it's gone. I just felt it leave my throat.

That's always stuck with me. It's the clearest example I know of how much praising Jesus embarrasses Satan. The other example I have in mind is when Jehoshaphat and Judah found that their country had been invaded by an army.

Which apparently numbered about 1 million people. And they had a prayer and fasting day. Which is a good thing to do.

And the Lord spoke and said don't worry about this battle. It's all right it's in my hand. Just go out.

And next day they went out. But in front of the army. You know this story.

They set the choir to praise and sing praises to God. And so on. And the Bible says when they began to praise.

The Lord set ambushes for their enemies. And when they arrived at the field of battle. The enemies had totally destroyed one another.

They didn't have to fight. All they had to do was gather the plunder. And as I've been thinking of the situation in the Middle East over the past six months or so.

I feel God has shown me that if my people will praise me jubilantly, continually, excitedly. I'll set ambushes for the enemies. Now I don't like to say the enemies of Israel.

I'd rather say the enemies of God. And let God determine who his enemies are. And then proclaim.

There's a tremendous power in proclaiming. Undoubtedly the hardest place for the gospel to make progress, is the Middle East. You can talk about Japan or Russia or anywhere else being hard.

But none of them are as hard as the Middle East. And you know one main reason for the hardness of the Middle East. Is that for nearly 14 centuries, five times every day, from every mosque, there's gone out a proclamation, with words praising Allah and Muhammad.

Which I will not use. And let me say the Allah of the Muslims, is not the God of the Bible. And that has, has brought a yoke of iron, over the peoples of the Middle East.

Now I believe the solution, is a counter-proclamation. And because we've got the truth. I don't think we have to do it for 14 centuries.

I don't know how long we have to do it for. But I think there's so much more power in the truth, than in the lies of Satan. That if we will begin to proclaim, something will happen.

Now I want to suggest to you what we should proclaim. Because it's in the same chapter and the tenth verse. And it's a proclamation to be made to the nations.

Hear the word of the Lord O nations. And declare it in the isles of far off. And that includes the British Isles.

You know that. They may not seem far off to us. But remember these words were spoken in the Middle East.

So this, if anything ever applied to the British Isles, this did. Now what are we to proclaim? Here it is. He who scattered Israel, will gather him.

That's exciting. But never stop there. Because it says and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.

So brothers and sisters, Israel is in a desperate situation. But we really do not need to be afraid of the outcome. For the same God who is gathering him, will keep him.

Let's proclaim it. I love that passage in Hebrew. Because Hebrew has such a tremendous way of condensing things.

And the statement, he who scattered Israel, will gather him. Is all said in three words in Hebrew. Mizzareh Yisrael Yecabzenu.

Mizzareh the one who scattered, Yisrael, Israel, Yecabzenu, will gather him. And interestingly enough, that verb Yecabz, is directly connected with the word kibbutz. It's almost as if God said, when I gather them back, I'll gather them back in kibbutzim.

I'm sorry to say that that is all there is of this recording.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23976.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/billy-strachan/the-battle-for-israel-pt-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net