

Wisdom about Israel
Pastor Joe Oakley
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In our series on James we have been in a section on the second coming of Jesus Christ. In light of current events, I feel led to preach another sermon on the end times called Wisdom About Israel.

Have you ever noticed how almost every day the focus of the world's attention is on a small country of 9.7 million people in the Middle East?

There are many other countries and many other conflicts in the world. Why is the focus on this nation that is about the size of New Jersey? Texas is 32 times bigger than Israel!

The world's attention is directed to this tiny nation for one important reason: Israel plays a key role in the plan of God and the return of Christ.

So what happens in Israel are signs of the times that we cannot ignore. We all need a biblical view of Israel. We cannot have the world's view or the Palestinian view or even the Zionist view – we need God's view!

Israel is the center of world events in the last days. Why is that? Because the Jewish people were chosen by God – Israel is the Holy Land and Israel is the focus of prophecies about the end times. So – if you want to understand the biblical view of the end times, you need to understand God's view of Israel and how Israel fits into His plan.

Of all the cities in the world, Jerusalem is the city to watch. Here is some of what the Bible says about Israel in the end times:

- There will be terrible conflict in Israel
- The Antichrist will make a 7-year covenant of "peace" with Israel
- The temple will be rebuilt in Jerusalem
- The Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel, and worldwide persecution of Israel will result
- Israel will be invaded
- Israel will ultimately recognize Jesus as their Messiah

There is much turmoil in Israel today. Hamas attacked Israel and there is now a war in Gaza. Could what is taking place in Israel today indicate that the end is near? Yes. Does it necessarily mean the end is near? No. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 24:4-6: *Watch out that no one deceives you... You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.*

Jesus prophesied about wars and rumors of wars and the Bible prophesies a final assault of the nations against Jerusalem. But these “wars and rumors of wars” are not explicit signs of the end.

Israel has experienced many wars in its history and the current war may just be one in a long series of wars, or it could be the one that leads to the final war. We just don't know. But here's some Bible truths that will give us wisdom about Israel.

1- God loves Israel with an everlasting love

This current war definitely shows us how all the nations of the world can turn against Israel. I have never in my lifetime seen so much anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment. Satanically influenced hatred of Israel is the reason that there are those who want to see Israel destroyed.

Whether it is Sennacherib, king of Assyria; Haman, official of Persia; Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany; or Raisi, President of Iran, or terrorists like Hamas, attempts to completely destroy Israel will always fail. The persecutors of Israel will come and go, but the persecution will remain until the second coming of Christ.

Why is this? According to the Bible, it is because God has a special plan for the nation of Israel, and Satan wants to defeat that plan. Remember God said this to Israel in Jeremiah 31:3

I have loved you with an everlasting love.

Deuteronomy 10:15 says:

The Lord chose your ancestors as the objects of His love. And He chose you, their descendants, above all other nations, as is evident today.

Whatever and whoever God loves – Satan hates. And he wants to destroy them. That's why there is such a history of antisemitism and we are seeing a huge increase in it today. This racial hatred is demonically inspired. And yet, with all of this hatred, the people of Israel have endured. That's because:

2. God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham

In Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

History has proven beyond reasonable doubt that the nations that have blessed the Jewish people have had the blessing of God; the nations that have cursed the Jewish people have experienced the curse of God.

Why did God choose Abraham and Israel? All we know is that it was His sovereign will. Deuteronomy 7:6-8 says about the Jewish people:

The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loves you...

God's ways are not our ways.

He chooses the small to confound the great.

He chooses the foolish to confound the wise.

He chooses the weak to confound the strong.

He chooses the few to confound the many.

He chooses the poor to confound the rich.

Why does He do that? So it is obvious that the wisdom is God's – the power is God's – the riches are God's. All glory belongs to Him and Him alone. God also said this in the covenant He made with Abraham in Genesis 17:7

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

As part of this covenant:

3. God gave Israel to the Jews forever.

Genesis 17:8 says:

The whole land of Canaan, where you are now foreigners, I give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.

Genesis 13:15 says:

All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

No matter what you hear about the land belonging to the Palestinians, God says it belongs to the Jews forever! But here's what happened.

4. Jesus said the Jews would lose their land and then get it back

And for most of history since the time of Christ, Christians believed they were the generation to see His second coming. But that was impossible because there was no Jewish state in Israel.

Jesus predicted the destruction of Israel in Matthew 24 – which took place 40 years after His prophecy. Jesus also said this in Luke 21:23-24

There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Jewish people lost their homeland in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed the temple and drove most of the Jews out of Israel. And Jerusalem was indeed ruled by Gentiles for centuries – including Roman and British and Muslim control until the 6-Day War in 1967.

For 2000 years the Jews were spread out across the globe and Jerusalem was under Gentile control. But Jesus said there would come a time when the times of the Gentiles ruling Jerusalem would end. And that did indeed happen!

God always said that He would gather the scattered Jewish people back to the land of Israel again. There are so many Bible prophecies about this that I can't read them all. Ezekiel 36:24 says:

For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

Amos 9:14-15 says:

"I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them... I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God.

God said He would bring the exiled, scattered Jewish people back to Israel again – and that they would never be uprooted again. And in the history of the world, this has never happened before. No people group that has been driven from their country and decimated by the millions have survived and returned to their land after thousands of years!

Have you ever met a Hittite or Ammonite or Edomite? No! Those ancient people groups disappeared from the earth! But I bet you know an Israelite! Because God spared the Jews and brought them back to their homeland. That day was May 14, 1948 – a pivotal day in human history and in Bible prophecy. For on that day the nation of Israel was reestablished – fulfilling a 2500-year-old Bible prophecy.

On the heels of the Holocaust, who would have ever thought that these Jewish people who lost six million lives to the Nazis would somehow regather in their homeland, but it happened, against all odds. And the United States was the first nation to acknowledge that. And now, Israel is the only nation on earth that inhabits the same land, bears the same name, speaks the same language, and worships the same God that it did 3,000 years ago.

God's prophecies always come to pass!

By the way, the fact that the Jews were exiled then got their land back is what the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is all about. The Palestinians were the people who occupied the land of Palestine while the Jewish people were scattered. They claim ownership of the land of Israel and they want the land back! They never were the owners because in those times – as we saw in the words of Christ – the land of Israel was ruled by Gentiles.

By the way, when you hear protestors saying, "From the river to the sea," they are talking about the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. That's Israel. And what Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists want is to take possession of that land.

This week I read the Hamas Charter for myself and their express purpose is to destroy Israel and kill the Jews. They do not want a 2-state solution and they do not want peace – they have turned it down many times. The Charter says the only solution is jihad – war. They want the land and they want the Jews dead. I saw an interview with a Hamas leader this week and he said that they will never stop attacking Israel until they destroy Israel. This is why Israel will not back down in its goal to wipe out Hamas.

And other nations are joining Hamas in this unholy war. This was prophesied in Psalm 83:1-8

Do not be quiet, O God. Don't you hear the uproar of Your enemies? Don't you see that Your arrogant enemies are rising up? They devise crafty schemes against Your people; they conspire against Your precious ones. "Come," they say, "let us wipe out Israel as a nation. We will destroy the very memory of its existence." Yes, this was their unanimous decision. They signed a treaty as allies against You—these Edomites and Ishmaelites; Moabites and Hagrites; Gebalites, Ammonites, and Amalekites; and people from Philistia and Tyre. Assyria has joined them, too.

The Bible says there will be a time when these nations attack Israel. I studied to find out who these nations are today.

- Edom, Moab and Ammon were in present day Jordan.
- The Ishmaelites and Hagrites were in modern day Saudi Arabia.
- Assyria is modern day Syria, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, and Turkey.
- The Gebalites and Tyre are in modern day Lebanon.
- And Philistia is now the modern-day Palestinians.
- The Philistines lived in cities on the coast of Israel including Gaza.

Today we already see Gaza, Iran, Lebanon and Syria attacking Israel and US bases in the area. If these other nations get involved in this war, we know we are seeing a fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

And by the way – innocent Palestinians getting killed is a tragedy. But not to Hamas. I saw an interview with one of their leaders who said those people dying is not a tragedy because they are martyrs for their cause. That’s why they use them as human shields and why they use their deaths as propaganda against Israel when they really see them as martyrs.

At this point, this war is not the end-time war because the Bible teaches that one day Israel will be attacked by a large force from the north. That force is identified as Gog and Magog which could be Russia and Iran. Not once in the past 2,500 years has Russia formed a military alliance with Persia, or Iran, but they have recently developed one.

Am I saying with absolute certainty this is the scenario that will play out? No. But if you get up one morning and read this headline, “Russia Attacks Israel,” fasten your seatbelt because you’re seeing Bible prophecy fulfilled in your lifetime before your very eyes.

Iran has for a long time stated that their objective is to destroy Israel. They are also developing a nuclear weapon in order to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth. And by the way – terrorist groups consider Israel to be the little Satan. Who is the great Satan? The US.

One leader of Iran said, “Is it possible for us to witness a world without America and Zionism? You had best know that this slogan and this goal are altogether attainable, and surely can be achieved. The regime that is occupying Jerusalem must be wiped off the map.

And for Christians, we know which side to support in this battle.

5- The Bible tells us to support Israel

Psalm 122:6 says:

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: may they prosper who love you.

The scriptural principle of prosperity is tied to blessing Israel and the city of Jerusalem. Remember the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

I believe that one of the reasons America has been so blessed is because we have always supported Israel.

That’s why one of my most frequent prayers for every President and the US government is that they continue to be a strong ally and supporter of Israel. I want America to be blessed, not cursed.

That's why we regularly pray for the peace of Jerusalem and give to organizations that bless Israel – like Jewish Partnership Initiative.

Supporting Israel does not mean we support everything they do, but we do support them as an ally. If we as a church and you as an individual want the blessing of God, we must continue to stand by Israel.

God has given us warnings in His Word about the end times. God is warning us through what is happening in Israel. What should Christians be doing in the light of all this? I've already taught you to be watching, waiting, working, worshipping and witnessing. But we also need to pray.

The Bible tells us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We want to pray that this horrific terrorism stops, and that they're able to get their hostages back. And we want to pray that God places His hand of protection on the nation of Israel during this war. And the last thing I want you to know about Israel is that:

6- Israel is the place where Jesus will physically return!

Acts 1:9-12 records the ascension of Christ to heaven.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky?

This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives...

So, Jesus ascended bodily to heaven from the Mount of Olives and one day He will return bodily from heaven to the Mount of Olives. God said in Zechariah 14:2-5

I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it... Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south... Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him.

God will intervene against the nations that come against Israel in the world's last battle. When the feet of Jesus touch the Mount of Olives a mighty earthquake will split it in half to provide a way of escape for the people who have been trapped by the siege of Jerusalem. Then the Lord will defeat the enemies of Israel.

Now listen to what happens in Zechariah 14:9 & 11

The Lord will be King over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and His name the only name... Jerusalem will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.

Verse 16 says:

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty...

Revelation 11:15 says it this way:

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever.

So, do not fear! God is in control and His plan will be accomplished in His time! It's not for us to know the times or seasons, but we should know the Lord of the seasons! We don't know when it will happen, but we do know what will happen!

We have read the end of the book and Jesus wins!

The Lord God Almighty will defeat all His enemies, Jesus will return to the earth to rule and reign as King!

And guess what? Revelation 5 says that we will rule and reign with Him on earth!