

The Role of Israel and the Jews in the Bible

Israelis - citizens of the Nation or state, living within its boundaries, not necessarily religious. 20-25% of Israeli Jews identify as religious while the majority (around 45% or more) are secular, cultural or traditional.

Jews - Religious people of the Jewish faith from the Old Testament. The term "Jew" became more common after the Babylonian Exile.

Zionists - a wide range of support, from political and cultural to religious who refer to Israel being established from a divine plan. Mount Zion is a hill outside the Old City of Jerusalem that represents the ruling government of God's kingdom. The place where heaven and earth overlap and God's blessings flow to all creation.

Hebrews - the ancestors of the Jewish people. Descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who gave us the Hebrew language. Previous slaves in Egypt who were delivered into the promised land.

The boundaries of the land for the nation, were occupied throughout the Bible until the dispersal of the nation of Israel began with the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in **70 CE** and continued through exile and persecution, culminating in the Holocaust. The modern state of Israel was established in 1948, which then prompted a mass immigration of Jews back to their ancestral homeland.

In the Bible, Israel's primary role is to be a chosen people, a "light to the nations," and the lineage through which the Messiah, Jesus, would come to bring salvation to the world.

Scripture as to the chosen people:

- **Genesis 15:18:** The Lord makes a covenant with Abram, giving him and his descendants the land from the Nile to the Euphrates river as an everlasting possession.
- **Deuteronomy 7:6:** Israel is called God's "chosen people".
- **Deuteronomy 11:12:** States that the land of Israel is a land for which the Lord "cares" and His "eyes are always upon it".
- **Psalms 122:6:** An appeal to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem"
- Romans 11:25-29: God has a special future plan for the nation of Israel.
- Gen 12:3 - I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

3 Important covenants God made:

1. **The Land** - Abraham was told to go to the "promised land" and settle there. (Canaan 2,000 BC)
2. **The Law** - Moses was given 613 commandments including the big 10 on Mt Sinai (1300 BC in Egypt) 200 miles away from Israel.
3. **The Lineage** - David was told (2 Sam 7:16) that the messiah would come from his Family bloodline. Jerusalem was known as the city of David. His son Solomon built the temple in 966 BC.

Jesus was a Jew, born in Israel and ascended after the resurrection, from the land where He will also physically return to. Upon Jesus' birth / arrival, The Jews rejected Him as Messiah, but the Gentiles accepted Christ as God's chosen Messiah. Thus, the chosen people were now known as "the church", the called out ones.

Several terms are used to describe the New Nation of God's people:

1. **Replacement theology** - the Church has replaced Israel as God's covenanted people,
2. **Dispensationalism** - the modern nation-state of Israel fulfills a vital role as a continuation of biblical prophecy and is crucial for future end-time events.
3. **National and Spiritual Distinction** - God has distinct plans for the church (spiritual Israel) and the modern nation-state of Israel (physical Israel). The book of Revelation says that Armageddon will be a war of all Nations against the 1 Nation of Israel. Christ will return and defend His people and establish His Kingdom.