

Romans 11:1

What About Israel?

1) Understanding the Question (11:1)

a) In a limited sense...

- Rom 9:3, 11:15
- Judges (continual cycle)
- Isaiah 2:6 – “*You have rejected Your people, the house of Jacob...*”
- Isa 50 / Jer 3 – God “divorced” Israel
- Matthew 21:33-46 – “*kingdom will be taken away from you, given to a people producing fruits.*”
- Matthew 23:37-38 – “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... your house is left to you desolate.*”

b) In an ultimate sense...

2) What the Church has been Taught – 4 Particular Views (Supersession)

1. Anti-Israel – No place for Israel in God’s plan, nor for any Jews in the church

- Irenaeus (178AD) – “Because the Jews repudiated Christ, God granted their inheritance to the Gentiles alone” (*Against Heresies*, 4.21.3)
- Origen (240AD) – “The Jews will never be restored to their former condition... the invitation offered them by God to pass to others – the Christians. The Jews are altogether abandoned” (*Against Celsus*, 4:22, 2:8)
- Emperor Constantine (325AD) – “We ought not, therefore, to have anything in common with the Jews... we desire, dearest brethren, to separate ourselves from the detestable company of the Jews... it is your duty not to tarnish your soul by communication with such wicked people. (edict following *Council of Nicea*)
- Chrysostom (370AD) – “You [Jews] did slay Christ, you did spill his precious blood. This is why you have no chance for atonement, excuse, or defense.” (*Against the Jews, Homily VI*)
- Ambrose (380AD) – After preaching that the Jewish synagogue was a “house of impiety, a receptacle of folly, which God himself had condemned, the people of Milan went out and burned down a synagogue. Ambrose replied, “I declare that I set fire to the synagogue, or at least I ordered those who did it, that there might not be a place where Christ is denied.”
- Augustine (496AD) – “The Christian people are rather ‘Israel.’ The ‘Israel’ that will ultimately be saved are the predestined elect ones drawn from Jews and Gentiles... Judaism is simply relegated to a status in salvation-history assigned to the pre-Christian past.” (*Augustine on the Psalms*, Ps 114:3)
- Martin Luther (1517AD) - “Listen, Jew, are you aware that Jerusalem and your sovereignty, together with your temple and priesthood, have been destroyed for over 1,460 years?” . . . For such ruthless wrath of God is sufficient evidence that the Jews, surely rejected by God, are no longer His people, and neither is He any longer their God.” (*Luther’s Works*, 47:138-9)

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2. A-Israel – No place for national Israel in God’s future plans, but repentant Jews can join the church

- John Calvin – There is no continuing corporate election of Israel, only election of individual Israelites who accept Christ (*Institutes* 3.21.6)
Because the Jews did not reciprocate as willing partners in God’s covenant, they deserve to be repudiated (*Institutes* 4.2.3)

3. A-Israel + – A-Israel position, yet allowing a large population of Jews will come to faith in the last days

- John Piper – “There is coming a day, I think Paul says, when there will be a great turning of Israel to Jesus her Messiah, and the whole ethnic group of Israel will be saved by trusting in Jesus. I think that is what Paul is talking about in Romans 11:25–26.” (*Ask Pastor John*, Episode 1004)

“Jewish believers in Jesus and Gentile believers will inherit the Land... Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians will not quibble over the real estate of the Promised Land because the entire new heavens and the new earth will be ours.” (*Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East*, Truth #6)

4. Scriptural – Though the Church now enjoys through Christ the first-fruits of Israel’s “New Covenant,” the Church has not replaced Israel and God will literally fulfill in the last days the promises He made national Israel just as they are stated in the OT and NT.

3) God’s Purposes for Israel

a) His Holy (set-apart) Nation

- Exodus 19:6
- Jeremiah 31:31-40

b) Promise of Physical Blessing

- Isaiah 65:17-25
- Zechariah 8:20-23

c) National Prominence / Blessing to all Nations

- Genesis 12:2-3
- Isaiah 2:2-4
- Ezekiel 37:24-28
- Isaiah 60

4) Why is this so Important?

a) Glory

b) Hope

- Romans 11:2
- Romans 11:29