

**What (or Who) is Israel?**  
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Note: It's an important subject. The term "Israel" is used 2566 times in the Bible

Those who study the ancient world from a secular point of view will come across many great men from Mesopotamia, but Abraham will not be one of them. They will examine the great civilizations of Assyria and Egypt, of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, but Israel (if it figures at all) will hardly be more than a blip on their mental horizon. To write the history of antiquity putting Israel at the center is rather like writing the history of Europe from the standpoint of Luxembourg, a country that is geographically central but otherwise insignificant. Yet that is precisely what the Bible does, and the truth of its claim has been borne out by events. It is no exaggeration to say that while the great empires of the past have disappeared into history, the tiny nation of Israel still exists and has spread its wings to the far corners of the globe, bequeathing to us not only Judaism, but Christianity and Islam as well. All over the world, children are still named David and Rebecca, but not Nebuchadnezzar or Nefertiti. Furthermore, while other nations have collapsed and disappeared relatively quickly when subjected to outside pressure, Israel has undergone centuries of relentless persecution and even attempted genocide, but it has withstood every assault. Today it is as strong and influential as it has ever been. For an "insignificant" nation, Israel has gone a long way, and its story is far from over. (Gerald Bray, *God is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Crossway, 2012) p.38-9.)

**I. What about Israel?** Romans chapter 8 ends with a wonderful message of hope in Christ. The gospel is amazingly good news for all who come to Him. But... If the promises of God are so sure and the love of God so secure, then what about Israel's current unbelief? Why did Israel reject the promised Messiah? Does God no longer intend to fulfill his promises to Israel as a race or a nation? Has his word failed regarding their destiny? Remember, Israel is one of the great longitudinal themes in the Bible, a thread that holds the entire metanarrative together—the people of God, created out of nothing, sustained by the Lord and promised an eternal place in his new creation (Isa. 65:17-19). Romans 9-11 is crucial for tying together the OT and the NT by demonstrating that God has not betrayed or rejected Israel and that the New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Old. (See Douglas Moo, *Romans* NICNT p553)

**II. Paul responds in three basic concepts:**

- A. Chapter 9. Israel's unbelief has not derailed God's plan. 9:1-29
  - 1. *It is not as though the word of God has failed!* 9:6
  - 2. He is sovereign and providential in salvation promises.
  - 3. He has preserved a **remnant** from within Israel along with many Gentiles.
- B. Chapter 10. Israel's unbelief is their own responsibility. 9:30-10:21
  - 1. *They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* Rom.10:1-2
  - 2. They are in a state of rebellion and willful ignorance.
    - a) Like the rest of humanity (Rom.1-3)
- C. Chapter 11. Israel's unbelief is partial, temporary, and purposeful. 11:1-35
  - 1. *God has not rejected his people, Israel.* Rom.11:1-2
  - 2. He has a plan in Israel's current unbelief. He will eventually bring them to himself sovereignly through Christ.

**III. Romans 11. Note 3 things:**

- A. The root system of Abraham's faith is the source of all eternal life. Gen.12:1-3; Rom.4:1-12; Gal. 3:7-29
  - 1. Jesus Christ (the ultimate seed of Abraham) grafts us by faith into that root system, which was the source for Israel's life and identity.
- B. God has not rejected His people Israel. Rom.11:1-2
  - 1. Even though it might appear that way right now.
- C. The plan of God includes a restoration of Israel in a way that will include both Jews and Gentiles in an entirely new reality centered on Christ. Rom.11:25-36; Eph.1:10-12
- D. *How did we get here? Let's start at the beginning ...*

#### IV. The Story Arc of the Bible

##### A. Creation, Fall, Redemption, Renovation/Re-creation.

1. Creation: Genesis 1-2
  - a) A good creation with God at the center.
2. Fall: Genesis 3
  - a) A turn to the dark side with Man at the center.
3. Redemption: Genesis 3-Revelation 20
  - a) A single-handed divine rescue from the dominion of darkness Col.1:13-14
4. Renovation: Revelation 21-22
  - a) A new creation with God at the center. (Isa.65:17-19)

##### B. The entire Redemption section has Israel in the action spiritually one way or another.

1. From Genesis 12—50 it's about Abraham's family, specifically the 12 tribes "of Israel" and Abraham's "seed"...
2. How did this come about?

#### V. Israel: Five aspects of the name *Israel* that help us trace the redemption of the world.

##### A. **Israel as a Called People: Genesis:** *The creation of the people of Israel* miraculously and against the odds.

1. **Abraham.** A promise to Abraham that his seed (brought about miraculously) would bless the world. **Gen.12:1-3; 15:17-20; 22:18.** (c.2000 BC)
2. **Isaac.** Abraham's son by divine intervention, *the Son of Promise*.
  - a) Not Ishmael, even though God blessed Ishmael.
3. **Jacob.** Abraham's grandson (through Isaac), Jacob, becomes the man who wrestled with God, but won by continuing to trust Him. Gen.32:28/ **35:10**
4. **Israel.** God changes Jacob's name to *Israel* = "One Who Wrestles with God". (**Gen. 32:28, 35:9-15**)
  - a) Jacob/Israel became "the 12 tribes of Israel."
5. **Tribes.** Jacob/Israel's family becomes a contentious clan, yet under God's watchful eye. **Gen.45:5, 50:20.** (1750s BC)
  - a) The 12 patriarchs (Jacob's sons) were a sizable clan (70 people Gen.46:27).
    - (1) The children of Israel, the Israelites.
    - (2) They sold Joseph into slavery. (Gen.37—46)
  - b) Israel as a "seed" nation went to "germinate and grow" in Egypt around 1700—1400 BC
    - (1) The clan of Jacob/Israel was like a seed that would grow into a huge tree, a nation, over the next 400 years.
  - c) Israel as God's choice among the nations. Deut.7:6-8
    - (1) Not because you were more in number than other nations, but simply because I have loved you and you belong to me...
6. Israel miraculously delivered as a huge multitude under Moses. Exodus...

##### B. **Israel as a Theocratic Nation: Exodus:** *The formation of the nation of Israel as a theocracy.*

1. A people rescued from Egypt and forged into a theocracy at Mt. Sinai.
  - a) Mosaic covenant was a covenant and a constitution for the nation.

But you Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen the offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off; fear not, for I am with you; for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isa 41:8-10, ESV)

2. The Lord would have taken His people across the desert and into their promised land, but they rebelled. (Ex.32-33)
  - a) This becomes a recurring theme in their history. (Acts 7:51-53)

C. **Israel as a Promised Land: Joshua:** *The donation of the land of Israel for a permanent home.* **Joshua 21:43-45.**

1. The Lord promised to give Israel the land of Canaan, partly as a judgment against the idolatry of the Canaanites, but ultimately simply because he decided to (Gen.15:16).
  - a) Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8, 26:3-4, 28:13-14; Ex.6:8; Lev.20:24; Deut.1:20-21; Josh 21:43-45
2. This was to be place where Israel would represent the Lordship of YHWH in a fallen and idolatrous world. **Deut.4:5-8**
  - a) Note, Israel would retain this land only if they remained loyal to the Lord (Deut.28), which they did not. This is why after hundreds of years of idolatry the Lord let them be overtaken first by Assyria in the north (722 BC) and then by Babylon against Judah (586 BC). The pre-exilic prophets warned of these attacks. Yet, even then, he promised to bring them back to their land after the discipline was over (Jer.29:10-11). This happened in 538 BC.
3. Yet, they struggled with idolatry from the very first.
  - a) They rebelled at Sinai. (Ex.32, golden calf)
  - b) They rebelled on the border of the Promised Land. (Numbers 13-14)
    - (1) Moses' entire generation was lost in the desert. 40 years
  - c) They took the land under Joshua, but not completely, and were repeatedly seduced by idolatry.
    - (1) The time of the Judges was the "dark ages" of Israel in many ways. (1400—1050 BC)
  - d) They wanted a king and got three. (1-2 Samuel; 1 Kings)
    - (1) Saul, David, Solomon. 1050—930 BC
    - (2) King David, the only one of the three that remained loyal to the Lord, is the type of the King in God's Kingdom (2 Sam.7)
  - e) They had a civil war after Solomon died, (because of idolatry). 930 BC (1 Kings 11). They became two nations.
    - (1) Northern Israel, capital Samaria.
      - (a) Steeped in idolatry from the beginning.
      - (b) Sold into slavery in 722 to the Assyrians.
    - (2) Judah, capital Jerusalem.
      - (a) Struggled more or less with idolatry all along.
      - (b) Sold into slavery in 586 to the Babylonians.
  - f) Why the captivity? They refused to listen to the prophets' warnings against idolatry.
    - (1) The pre-exilic prophets sounded the alarm loud and long, but to no avail.
  - g) They lost the land and spent a generation in exile because of idolatry.
    - (1) In Babylon, from Mid-6<sup>th</sup> century (586) to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> (century BC. 538 -445)
4. The Lord brought them back, but they never achieved the unity or political autonomy predicted in the prophets.
  - a) The post-exilic prophets spoke to them. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Ezra-Nehemiah
  - b) They were restored to the land. They rebuilt the temple (after a fashion) but they never achieved complete freedom or fulfillment of the earlier prophecies of world class national and spiritual identity. (c. 455 BC)
  - c) They struggled against the Greeks, then the Romans. Finally losing the land again totally after Jesus was crucified (70—136 AD)
    - (1) As Jesus prophesied, Israel lost the temple in 70 AD and the whole city in 135 AD with the Bar Kochba rebellion. Jerusalem was renamed Capitolina by the Romans and Jews were forbidden to live there.

D. **Israel as a Failed Servant: The Gospels:** *The rebuke of the nation of Israel by Messiah himself.*

1. The OT prophets, especially Isaiah, indicted Israel for their failure to trust and obey the Lord under the Deuteronomic (Mosaic) covenant. (See Isa.5:1-7 as an example)
2. John the Baptist, the last of the OT prophets called Israel to repent. Matt.3:1-12
3. Jesus prophesied the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of Israel. Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-29.
  - a) He cursed the fig tree as a sign against the Jewish temple system Mk.11:12-19
  - b) See also Jesus' parable of the wicked tenants in Luke 20:9-18

**E. Israel as a Future Blessing. The Prophets and Apostles:** *The regeneration of Israel as the cornerstone of a new and good creation.*

1. Jer.23:5-6; Ez.37:21-27. An earthly kingdom where goodness reigns.
2. Isa.9:6-7; Dan.7:13; Acts 1:6. A future kingdom under Messiah's personal reign.
3. Rom.11:25-27. A restored people in the future, grafted back into the Abrahamic promise through faith in Christ and under Messiah's grace and rule.
  - a) "All Israel will be saved." Note: when Paul wrote this, Israel was a theocratic province (state) within the Roman empire, before the temple was destroyed.
4. Rev.20:1-6. A restored earth under Messiah's reign for 1000 years?
  - a) Many scholars think this millennial promise may offer the fulfillment of the OT promises of a truly earthly kingdom with redeemed Israel at the center of it, yet only a down payment on the new heavens and new earth. (Rev.21-22).
  - b) *If that is true, we will see it and God is not asking for a vote from us about it. Do not obsess about this.*

**F. So, what happened between Israel the Failed Servant and Israel the Future Blessing?**

1. *Good Question! One would think God was really done with Israel, giving up on their original destiny, but that's not what the New Testament says...*

**VI. Spiritual and Faithful Israel: Three more subtle aspects of this name Israel:**

**A. Israel as a Righteous Remnant. Rom.9:6-8; 11:5**

1. "True Israel". A continual minority within larger Israel that remained faithful all along. Rom.2:28
2. 1 Kings 19:18. Elijah thought he was alone, but there were 7000 that were still faithful to the Lord.
3. This group has continuity with the Church. Gal.6:14-16
  - a) The "Israel of God" here means all the people who belong to Christ and understand that the distinction between circumcised and uncircumcised is obliterated. (see Moo, BECNT *Galatians*, p.403)

**B. Israel as the Servant/Redeemer/Messiah.**

1. In the OT. Christ as fulfillment...
  - a) Abraham's Blessing (Gen.12:1-3; 22:18)
    - (1) The Savior would come from Abraham's seed Gal.3:16-18
  - b) David's King. (2 Sam.7:12-16)
    - (1) Isaiah's Shoot/Branch from Jesse (Isa.11:1-11)
  - c) Isaiah's Servant of YHWH. (Isa.42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12)
    - (1) You are my Servant, Israel. **Isa.49:3**
  - d) Isaiah's Redeemer (Go'el, kinsman redeemer), who fulfills the promises forever. **Isa.59:20-21**
2. In the NT. Jesus as Lord
  - a) As Messiah, the Davidic King in God's kingdom. Lk.1:32-33; Mk.1:15
    - (1) In Matthew's entire gospel culminating in Mtt.28:18-20.
    - (2) In Paul's writings see Rom.1:1-4.
      - (a) The gospel is about the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, and through Israel's Messiah to the world.
    - (3) Inaugurating the kingdom, to be completed in the future. Mk.1:15
  - b) As Messiah: The True Israel: Everything Israel was intended to be in a Remnant of One.
    - (1) The new Temple. Jn.2:13-22
      - (a) Replacing the existing temple and system
    - (2) The Lamb that was slain. Jn.1:36; Rev.5:12; 13:8
      - (a) Our Passover. 1 Cor.5:7
    - (3) The High Priest. Heb.7-8
      - (a) Replacing Moses and Aaron.
    - (4) The Fulfillment of the Torah. Matt.5:17-20
    - (5) The Bread of Life (Manna). Jn.6:35
    - (6) The Door to the Sheepfold (entry to the kingdom). Jn.10:9

- (7) The Good Shepherd. Jn.10:11 (Ps.23; Ez.34:11-23)
- (8) The Way, Truth, Life. Jn.14:6
- (9) The True Vine. Jn.15:1 (Isa.5:1-7; Ps.80:7-19)**
- (10) One with the Father. Jn.10:30
- (11) The promised One of Isaiah. Lk.4:16-19 (Isa.61:1-2)
- (12) The Cornerstone placed in Zion. 1 Pet.2:4-8 (Isa.28:16; Ps.118:22; Isa.8:14)
- c) The Messiah would do all that Israel was never able to do in her own strength and then offer that fulfilled reality to Israel and Gentiles as a free gift. (Rom.6:23)
  - (1) Pay for all the sins. Gal.3:13
  - (2) Grant all the goodness. 2 Cor.5:21
- 3. In the future: He will redeem Israel as a race and a nation. Isa.49:1-6; Acts 1:6; Rom.11:25-26; (Rev.20:1-6?)
  - a) Coming back to bring Israel to repentance and faith in Christ Jesus.
  - b) Establishing a place in this world where Israel should have been, and by the Lord's grace will be yet.

“As the end of this age approaches, Israelites in great numbers will seek to emulate the gentiles who through faith in Messiah are experiencing the blessings promised to Israel, and they will also be saved by believing the gospel.”  
(Frank Theilman, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, *Romans* [Crossway, 2018] p.556)

**C. Israel (through Messiah) as the root system of eternal life. The seed of Abraham saves Jews and gentiles alike. Rom.11:1-36 (Rom.1:16-17)**

- 1. God has not rejected his people, Israel. 1-10
  - a) There is a remnant, chosen by sheer grace.
- 2. They have stumbled but not fallen completely. 11-24
  - a) Their trespass has led to gentile salvation. (Acts 2:23)
  - b) And their full inclusion will be amazing. 12
  - c) So their acceptance will be like a resurrection. 15
  - d) *So, don't be arrogant against the Jews, because you were grafted into their promise, not the other way around.*
    - (1) *Real faith is the key—faith in Christ! (Rom.1:16-17, 2:29)*
- 3. They are hardened purposefully, but not totally or permanently. 25-32
  - a) The hardening allows Gentiles to come into the Kingdom. 25
    - (1) Acts 28:25-31. Gospel to the Gentiles, quoting Isa 6:9-10**
      - (a) Isa 6 is quoted 6 times in the NT describing Israel's hardness of heart.
      - (2) My sheep that are not of this fold. Jn.10:16
  - b) Yet, Israel still has the gift and calling from God. 28-29.
    - (1) Because of election (God's choice), beloved for the sake of the forefathers. 28
    - (2) Because the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.
    - (3) So, they will be grafted into the olive tree again.
- 4. So, God saves all people by grace through faith in Christ because all are entrapped in sin.
- 5. *Which means that God is utterly amazing in saving sinners of all kinds and receiving all the glory for the new creation. 33-36*
  - a) His ways are infinitely above ours, and beyond our figuring out. Isa.55:8-11. He saves by grace...

**D. The gospel of the kingdom is the fulfillment of the story of Israel through Israel's Messiah, Jesus.**

- 1. There will be a time when God is at the center of a truly renovated universe thanks to Israel's creation, failure, Messiah, and resurrection. Rev.21-22
- 2. Christ's resurrection guarantees our resurrection, Israel's resurrection, and the universe's resurrection.48
- 3. *No wonder Paul was overwhelmed at the end of Romans 11!!*

**VII. So, this is why we preach Christ, the gospel. Mark 1:14-15; 1 Cor.2:1-2**

- A. This is what the Lord instructed his apostles (and us) to do. Acts 1:6-8; Matt.28:18-20

### VIII. Five errors to avoid when thinking of Israel today:

#### A. Politically: *That it should not exist at all.*

1. The view of hardline Islamic Fundamentalism, especially the terrorist states and groups that bomb Israel regularly. Not all Arabs or Muslims think this, but it is a significant force in the Middle East. (Nabeel Jabour, Christian educator from Lebanon, ministering to Palestinian Christians.)
2. This is radically theologically unchristian and unbiblical thinking.
3. Israel was admitted to the UN as a member nation on May 14, 1949.
4. Since 1948, when it first declared its independence and was immediately attacked by the surrounding nations, Israel has defended itself against annihilation five times, in addition to constant terrorist attacks.
  - a) 1948, 1957, 1967, 1972, 1982,
  - b) Plus, the Hizballah attack in 2006 and the Hamas attack in 2023.

#### From the Medford Mail Tribune, AP release, 10-27-05...

Tehran, Iran – President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared Wednesday that Israel is a “disgraceful blot” that should be “wiped off the map” – fiery words that Washington said underscores its concern over Iran’s nuclear program.

Ahmadinejad’s speech to thousands of students at a “World Without Zionism” conference set a hardline foreign policy course sharply at odds with that of his moderate predecessor, echoing the sentiments of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of Iran’s Islamic revolution.

The United States said Ahmadinejad’s remarks show that Washington’s fears about Iran’s nuclear program are accurate.

“I think it reconfirms what we have been saying about the regime in Iran,” White House press secretary Scott McClellan told reporters in Washington. “It underscores the concerns we have about Iran’s nuclear intentions.”

Ahmadinejad also condemned Iran’s neighbors, which seek to break new ground in their relations with Israel. “Anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation’s fury,” state-run television quoted him as saying.

#### B. Religiously: *That it is a completely unified, theistic, Jewish nation.*

1. It is Jewish (created as a Jewish homeland), but it is not unified except on the subject that it should exist, and should defend itself against annihilation.
  - a) Even on this subject, some radical orthodox groups resist the state of Israel and expect it to be overthrown because it is not Jewish enough.
2. It is profoundly diverse politically and religiously, with many western style elements of democracy, amid powerful spiritual and racial undercurrents.
  - a) Of about 10 million, 75% are Jewish. (About 7.5 million Jews live in the US)
3. There is now and has been since the 12<sup>th</sup> century a significant Christian presence in Israel.
  - a) Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant.

...The modern state of Israel is not identical with the Jewish “nation” (the majority of whom do not live there), nor does it regard itself as the physical embodiment of the people of God. It offers Jews a homeland if they wish to take advantage of that, but does not try to force itself on all Jews as an integral part of their faith, nor does it exclude non-Jews from citizenship, as its ancient forbear did. (Gerald Bray, *God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* [Crossway, 2012] p.522)

#### C. Prophetically: *That it is currently the fulfillment of the all the prophecies of re-gathering.*

1. This is an overly spiritualized view of the current state of Israel. Most Jews do not live in Israel.
2. What we see in Israel today may well be the beginning of the events of the last days, but Israel today is not a Christian (Messianic) nation.
  - a) Though there is a remnant within the nation and many good works that seek to represent the Lord there.

**D. Theologically: That it has been rejected by God and replaced by the Church.**

1. Some teach a radical form of “Supersessionism”, the doctrine that Israel has been *thoroughly* superseded by the Church (replacement theology) and therefore has no prophetic significance.
  - a) In this view, the Church *is* Israel now with the result that racial, national Israel has no place at all in God’s redemptive plan.
    - (1) This would imply that God’s promises to Israel somehow failed. (see Rom.9:6).
  - b) This is precisely what Paul is dealing with in Romans chapters 9-11.
    - (1) See 9:6; 11:1-2, 11:25-29.
2. Some have taught a kind of “Bicovenantalism”, the doctrine that Israel has a covenant with God through the Torah, while all other people (Gentiles) may come to God through Jesus Christ.
  - a) This is a minority position because it is simply not biblical. Even a surface reading of Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Hebrews will clearly show that there is only one New Covenant, and it is offered to both Jews and Gentiles (Rom.1:16-17)
3. **Note:** The Church has inherited many of the spiritual promises God spoke to Israel because we have been drawn into Christ by faith. Paul in Gal.3:23-29 says that we are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise. (Moo, *Theology of Paul and His Letters* p.228-237)
  - a) *But Paul insists that this does not mean that Israel has been replaced by the Church such that Israel has no future in God’s plan.*
4. *So, material Israel today is still part of God’s plan for the redemption of the world, but the Church is the main player in this age according to the Lord Jesus (Matt.16:13-20).*
  - a) *The Church is the “elect”, the “people of God” composed of Jews and Gentiles, who have come into the kingdom by faith in Christ (Col.1:13-14; Eph. chapters 1-3; Romans, Galatians, Colossians).*
5. *There is continuity between **Remnant** Israel and the Church (Rom.9), but not necessarily between the Church and the **State of Israel** in this age.*

**E. Evangelistically: That it is more important than the church or the gospel or other missions in the world.**

1. The evangel, the good news, is not about the nation Israel, as important as that nation is in the plan of God. It is about Jesus Messiah himself, who he is and what he has done—which is not equated with the nation of Israel in this age (see Rom.1:1-4; 1 Cor.15:1-10; Acts 1:6-8, 28:25-31)
2. The Church is the locus of the kingdom life in this age, which is why we seek to bring all people, Jewish and Gentile into relationship with Christ. (Matt.16:13-20; Eph.1:1-4:32; Rom.1:16-17; Col.1:13-14)
3. The gospel of Christ is more important than Jewish nationalism or American nationalism.
  - a) There are Christian missions to Palestinian and Lebanese people, as well as many seeking to bring Jewish people to Christ in Israel. There is even a large Christian population underground in Iran as well, for whom we pray amid the current war. Our compassion for innocent victims in any war moves us to reach out in various missions to all sorts of people.
4. Messianic Judaism is not a “higher form” of Christianity. Gal.3:23-29
  - a) Being a Jewish Christian is not better than being a Gentile Christian and much of the fascination some Gentile Christians have with Jewish traditions and mysticism is deeply misplaced. Col.2:8-23; Eph.2:11-22; Gal.3:15-29.

**IX. Pastoral Advice to Christians.**

- A. Focus on the gospel more than on Israel. (Acts.1:6-8, 28:30-31)
  1. But remember that Israel/Judaism and Christianity share the same root system. We have more in common with Judaism/Israel than with any other religion.
- B. Reject all forms of antisemitism. (Racism) (Rom.11:18)
  1. Particularly notions that Israel should not exist as a State.
- C. Trust God to bring Israel to faith in Christ eventually. (Rom.11:25-27)
  1. Keep praying for the peace of Jerusalem. Ps.122:6
- D. Do not let views of Israel (especially end-times views) divide you as Christians. (Jn.13:34-35)
  1. Remember that this is not a salvation issue.

## **X. Appendix: What do Christians share in common with Israel and Judaism?**

### **A. More than they share with any other religion and many other nations...**

1. There is a personal and ultimate God whose name is YHWH (the Lord) and who created everything.
  - a) He is sovereign, providential, and decisive.
2. The Old Testament Scriptures (all of them) are really God's Word.
  - a) Christians (Protestants especially) have the same canon of the Old Testament as Jews.
3. Sin is the main problem between God and humanity.
  - a) Humans rebelled against God. Sin is a real thing.
4. God plans to bless the world through the seed of Abraham.
  - a) Through Isaac, not Ismael, even though God did bless Ishmael.
5. God's Law is binding and of eternal consequence.
  - a) The Mosaic Law is real and from God .
    - (1) Though Christians see it as fulfilled in Christ and by the Spirit and Jews do not believe this.
  - b) The Ten Commandments are the core of an eternal moral law and an indictment of human sin.
6. God's way of dealing with sin is through a covenant and an atoning sacrifice.
  - a) Contemporary Judaism has changed this because they don't have a temple anymore. But the original Christians were all Jewish and understood the concept of atonement. They saw Jesus as fulfilling it.
7. God intends to judge the world and bless the world with a messianic age and resurrection from the dead.

### **B. Where Christianity departed from Judaism is on who Jesus of Nazareth is and what he accomplished.**

1. The main difference between Judaism and Christianity is that Christians believe that Jesus has fulfilled and completed Judaism, and the Jews do not believe this.
2. There is such a thing as the Judeo-Christian worldview and if you compare it with other religions or philosophies you will see that Christianity grew from Judaism and is related to it more than any other worldview. Especially this is true of a comparison between Islam and Christianity. But also compare Hinduism, Buddhism, Spiritism, and Atheism, the main other contenders for human faith.