

THE MYSTERY OF ISRAEL

SESSION ONE - COREY STARK

I. UNDERSTANDING JESUS' HEART AND PURPOSE FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL

A. There is no subject *more significant* in its implications and consequences (Rom. 11:22), *more pervasive* throughout Scripture, *more controversial*, *catalytic* or *impacting* in the nations (Gen. 12:3), *more relevant* to humanity, *more central* to God's eternal purpose or *more personal* to the LORD than the subject of Israel. In fact, the LORD will ensure everyone feels the impact of what is happening in Jerusalem (Zech. 12:3).

Zech. 12:3 In that day... I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone [burden] for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.

B. To God, the Jewish people are the “*apple of His eye*” or center of His focus (Deut. 32:10; Zech. 2:8). He set Jerusalem as the center of nations – *geographically* (Ezek. 5:5), *politically* (Gen. 12:3; Dan. 7), *socially* (Deut. 32:8) and *prophetically*, as the primary timing indicator on His calendar (Dan. 9:24-27; Lk. 21:20).

Ezek. 5:5 This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her.

C. Jesus has *chosen* Jerusalem, as the city of the great King (Ps. 48:2; Mt. 5:35). It is His *eternal dwelling place* where He will reign over the entire universe forever (Ps. 132:13-14; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 43:7; Zech. 8:2)! This unique city was chosen before the world began. God is working off of a divine blueprint, naming the earthly counterpart after the heavenly Jerusalem. This was the city that Abraham sought (Heb. 11:10).

Ps. 132:13 For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: 14 “This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

D. You cannot exaggerate the LORD's great zeal for *His land* and *His people* (Ps. 87:2; Zech. 8), which are both primary factors in determining judgment at His return (Isa. 60:12; Joel 3:2; Zech. 12:3; Mt. 25:31-46).

Zech. 8:2 ““ I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervor I am zealous for her.’ 3 I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem... the City of Truth... the Holy Mountain.” (Ps. 132:13-14)

Joel 3:2 I will gather all nations... And I will enter into judgment with them on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land.

E. Isaiah gives insight that Israel is at the very heart of *everything* God is *saying* and *doing* on earth today!

Isa. 62:1 For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace [speaking], and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest [acting], until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns.

F. But this isn't just about Israel. The LORD chose Israel to *be blessed* to *be a blessing* to the whole earth. This is the Gospel given to Abram (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ps. 72:17; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8).

Gen. 12:1 The Lord said to Abram... “2 I will make you a great nation [Israel]; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing... 3 in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

G. To be *pro-Israel* doesn't mean that we blindly agree with everything that Israel does, but rather our desire to *understand* and *serve* Israel must be founded upon our *sincere love* and *allegiance to Jesus*, which causes us to stand with His *heart* and His *greater purpose* for Israel as a nation. We love what He loves!

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II. JESUS' BURNING DESIRE FOR ISRAEL TO BE A BLESSING – THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND

A. Some question God's choice of the Jewish people and city of Jerusalem, however that is starting the conversation midway in the equation ($3 + 2 + 3 = 8$). To understand God's choice of "who" (Jewish people) and His choice of "where" (city of Jerusalem), we must first understand the "why" behind it all by looking at the beginning and end of the story. At both ends we see *God's desire to dwell in unhindered face-to-face communion with His people in paradise on the earth forever*. This desire necessitates two things:

1. A permanent dwelling place on earth that is suitable for God – Jerusalem (Heb. 11:10).

Acts. 7:48 The Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

49 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? (Isa. 66:1)

2. A race of humans that is *comparable to* and fully *compatible with* the uncreated God – one new man.

Rev. 22:3 The throne of God... shall be in it [Jerusalem], and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. (Rev. 20:10)

3. These require a human with full governmental authority on earth to restore all things (Acts 3:21). This person must come from a people. Hence God's choice of the *Jewish people* and the *city of Jerusalem*!

B. Israel as a *blessing to all nations* (Gen. 12:3) has already begun as the *root* of the olive tree (Rom. 9:4-5), yet the *ultimate fulfillment* occurs in *Jesus* (Gal. 3) and then in *all Israel* at His return (Zech. 8:13).

Rom. 9:4 Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

Zech. 8:13 And it shall come to pass that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you shall be a blessing.

C. Jesus is the promised "Seed" that would crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8; Rev. 19:20). He is the "Seed of Abraham" who would bless all of the nations (Gen. 12:3; 17:5; 22:18; Gal. 3:8) and greater "Son" who would sit upon the throne of His father David forever (Isa. 9:6-7; Lk. 1:31-33). The fulfillment of these promises requires a Jewish King under God's authority, reigning from Jerusalem who would bless the nations by destroying the works of darkness and fully establishing God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven in preparation for the Father to dwell on earth with His people (Dan. 7:13).

Isa. 9:6 Unto us a Child is born... a Son is given... 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. (Lk. 1:31-33)

D. At Jesus' return, He will establish His "throne of glory" in Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17; Mt. 25:31), which will be the epicenter of releasing unprecedented waves of glory across the nations (Hab. 2:14). It will take a 1000-year period, called the *Millennium*, for the entire earth to be progressively restored to the original paradise-like conditions seen in the Garden of Eden (Isa. 9:7; 51:3; Ezek. 36:35; Zech. 6:12-13).