**The Importance of Israel in the End Times**

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The significance of Israel to the Christian Church is a subject deeply rooted in biblical history, theology, and prophecy. For centuries, Israel has held a special place in the hearts and faith of Christians around the world. To understand why Israel is critical to the Christian Church, we must explore key scriptures that shed light on this enduring relationship.

Genesis 12:3 - Blessings for All Nations

The foundation of the Christian faith is inextricably linked to God's covenant with Abraham, as outlined 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." This promise made to Abraham transcends time and ethnicity, extending to all nations. Christians view this covenant as the precursor to God's redemptive plan through Jesus Christ, who would ultimately bless the entire world through salvation. It underscores the critical role of Israel as the birthplace of this divine covenant.

Romans 11: The Olive Tree Analogy

The eleventh chapter of the Book of Romans is a pivotal passage that delves into the relationship between the Christian Church and Israel. Romans 11:17 employs the analogy of the olive tree, illustrating how Gentile believers are grafted into the Jewish root. This imagery highlights the interdependence of the two groups within the body of Christ. Israel, as the original olive tree, provides the nourishing sap that sustains both Jewish and Gentile believers. This scripture emphasizes that Israel is not replaced but rather an essential part of the Christian faith.

Romans 11:29 - God's Irrevocable Covenant

In Romans 11:29, Paul reaffirms the eternal nature of God's covenant with Israel, stating, "for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." This verse serves as a reminder to the Christian Church that God's promises to the Jewish people remain steadfast, emphasizing the enduring importance of Israel in His divine plan. Understanding this truth is vital to appreciating Israel's critical role in the Christian faith.

Isaiah 2:2-3 - The Spiritual Center

Isaiah 2:2-3 prophesies the role of Israel in the future as a spiritual center for the nations: "In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob.'" Christians interpret this scripture as a future reality where Israel plays a central role in the spiritual journey of all nations, drawing them closer to God.

Micah 5:2 - Birthplace of the Messiah

Micah 5:2 prophetically identifies Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." This scripture connects Israel directly to the birth of Jesus Christ, the central figure of the Christian faith. Recognizing Israel as the historical setting for this pivotal event underscores its critical role in Christian theology.

Acts 1:6-8 - The Witness to the Ends of the Earth

In Acts 1:6-8, Jesus instructs His disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." This command to spread the gospel from Jerusalem outward highlights the foundational role of Israel in the Christian Church's mission. It acknowledges Israel as the starting point for the proclamation of the Christian message, emphasizing its critical position in the global expansion of the faith.

Revelation 21:12-14 - The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:12-14 describes the New Jerusalem, which has twelve gates, each bearing the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This imagery signifies the ongoing significance of Israel in the eschatological vision of the Christian Church. The inclusion of Israel's tribes in the New Jerusalem signifies their eternal place in God's redemptive plan, symbolizing the unity of Old and New Testament believers.

Scriptural References

Romans 11 and the Jewish People

V. 1 – God has not rejected the Jewish people

V. 11- The Jewish people have not stumbled so as to fall beyond recovery

V. 26 – Eventually all Israel will be saved

V. 12 – Gentile believers were to have lived in such a way as to make Jewish people jealous for their own Messiah

V. 28-30 – Gentile believers were to have shown mercy to the Jewish people but have been their worst persecutors. “Christian” Spain with their “Christian” king and queen confiscated the wealth of the Jewish people, exiled them or killed them in 1492. “Christian” Germany and Austria murdered six million in the gas chambers of Europe in the mid 20th century.

V. 12 – As the Jewish people come more and more to faith, this will release “greater riches” to the entire world

V. 15 – Jewish people recognizing their own Messiah will be as “life from the dead.”

V. 17 – Gentile believers were never meant to replace Israel, but to “share in the nourishing sap of the [Jewish] olive root”- united as one body of believers worldwide.

V. 29 – God’s covenant with Israel and the Jewish people is “irrevocable.”

V. 33 – When we see all God’s promises coming to fruition with Jewish and Gentile believers living together in love and unity, we will be forever over and over in awe at the ”depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God.”

Conclusion

The role of Israel in the Christian Church is multifaceted, rooted in biblical history, theological teachings, and prophetic promises. As Christians, we acknowledge Israel as the birthplace of our faith, the setting for crucial events in the life of Jesus Christ, and the source of God's enduring covenant. The scriptures highlight Israel's essential role as an integral part of God's plan for the salvation of all nations.

Understanding the significance of Israel to the Christian Church fosters a deep appreciation for the rich tapestry of faith that spans across generations and cultures. It reminds us of our shared heritage and the interconnectedness of God's people, both Jewish and Gentile, within the body of Christ. Ultimately, Israel's critical role in the Christian Church is a testament to the profound unity of God's redemptive work throughout history.