

# **RETURN—PATRICK WALTON**

*A Series Through The Book of Joel—5.10.2020*

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## **Week 7 | The God Who Acts Pt.2—Joel 1:6-7”**

### **I. INTRODUCTION (JOEL 1:6-7)**

- A. Years ago, Art Katz was visiting a friend in the Netherlands, and while he was there, they were upstairs in this gentleman’s house talking about WWII and the occupation when it came into the Netherlands. Art’s friend said, *“Ya, I was right here, looking out this very window when the Nazi’s came into town and began taking over Jewish businesses. And Art replied, what did you do? The gentleman said, we did what every other Dutch Christian did; we closed the windows and went on with life.”*
- B. My personal concern for the North American Church is that we’ve exchanged the Gospel of the Kingdom for the Gospel of Western pragmatism (*5 points of this, and helpful tips here, principles for successful living*). This exchange has in turn divorced Christ and His Kingdom from its Middle Eastern roots, leaving us separated from the nation of Israel, and our Jewish heritage.
- C. And as Matisyahu rightly said regarding this divorce, *“...Erase the demons out of your memory, change your name and your identity, afraid of the truth and our dark history, why is everybody always chasing we, cut off the roots of your family tree, don’t you know, that’s not the way to be.”*
- D. This cutting out, or replacement of Israel is sad, but it’s understandable. From 70 AD after the destruction of the temple, the Jewish people had been in exile, longing to return to their land. And most all of our theological books, and preaching, due to doubt and unbelief were forced to replace Israel with Gentile followers of Jesus, because hardly anyone could fathom this nearly 2,000-year exiled people would do what no nation in world history has ever done.

### **II. WHY SHOULD YOU LOVE/CARE ABOUT ISREAL?**

- A. Why should someone like you, a 21<sup>st</sup> century Christ following Westerner, living mainly in the Seattle-metro care about the nation of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem? Though are many reason’s you should love Israel, I want to share four primary ones;
  - 1. Because Jesus loves/cares about Israel—Among the many reasons why Christ followers today should love Israel at the top is the fact that Jesus has already chosen them;
    - a. **Malachi 1:2-3** *“I have loved you, says the Lord. Yet you say, in what way have You loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” says the Lord. Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated...(Genesis 25:20-28; Romans 9:11-12).”*
    - b. **Isaiah 43:3-4** *“For I am the Lord your God, the Holy one of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you; therefore, I will give men for you, and people for your life.”*
    - c. **Isaiah 62:1,6-7** *“For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness...I have set watchman on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent. And give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”*

2. Because Jesus has chosen to eternally rule and reign from Jerusalem—God made a promise to David, that from his family, there would always be someone ruling and reigning from his throne eventually finding it’s fulfillment in Christ, back on this earth in His return;
  - a. **2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:16** “And your house (speaking of David) and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”
  - b. **Zachariah 8:2-3** “I am zealous for Zion with great zeal...I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the Lord of Hosts...”
  - c. **Jeremiah 3:17** “At that time Jerusalem shall be called the Throne of the Lord, an all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.”
  - d. **Luke 1:31-33** “And behold, you (Mary) will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”
  - e. **Matthew 5:34-35** “But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.”
3. Because the strength of our salvation rests in God’s covenant He cut with Abraham—This means that if God isn’t faithful to Israel (Abraham), and the Jewish people, then He’s not to be trusted by us (Gentiles) either (**Genesis 15**).
4. Because they carried the Seed of Messiah through unmentionable hardship—Through pressure, famine, death, tribulation, some deliverance, but decades of hardship, the nation of Israel faithfully carried the Promised Seed of **Genesis 3:15** that one day, Messiah would come;
  - a. **Hebrews 11:30-40**

### III. REASONS PEOPLE DON’T LOVE ISRAEL

- A. In large part, our pastors, theologians, seminaries and pulpits, alongside of satan’s rage are the primary reason that God’s family has little concern for the nation of Israel or the city of Jerusalem. Through our preaching we’ve done two primary things to bring this about;
  1. Our preaching has reduced the glory of God and the knowledge of God into weekly sermonettes that tether people to this temporal age, and not the eternal age which is still yet to come. Instead of teaching God’s family to fish, we feed them with a relevant, trendy, catchy fish each week to keep them coming back.
    - a. Much of God’s family is hooked on preachers, pastors and authors, but not Christ Himself, not the glory of the uncreated God who’s seated high in the heavens and does whatever He pleases.
    - b. Our preaching produces short soundbites of leadership quotes that seem to serve the here and now, and not the then and there. It’s a reduction of God’s glory, majesty, terror and splendor that serves us now, in this moment;

(1) *“I’m haunted by the thought that in the average evangelical Church, the God of the Bible would never be known by watching us worship...if you are going to remove the cringe factor from the scriptures, then you are going to end up with a very thin book. Hebrews 10:31 reveals that “it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” I wonder if there is anything that could even be remotely described as “terrifying” about the God we present in our “cringeless” worship. Just look at the decline of majesty and awe in evangelical hymns. There we see a surrender of conviction and accommodation to the culture, which is really nothing less than a “dumbing down” of the contents of our songs. We’ve gone from “holy, holy, holy” to “God the Swell Fellow.” –Albert Mohler Jr.*

2. We’ve separated ourselves from the end of the story. Somehow, large portions of God’s family have been convinced that the end isn’t that important, or that it’s too confusing to understand, so leave it for others to figure it out.
  - a. When we lose sight of the end of the story, we automatically lose sight of Israel, because God’s end-time purposes center squarely on the Jewish people, and the city of Jerusalem. Our Gospel is Israel-centric/Jerusalem-centric.

(1) *“Israel will be the litmus test for the Church, and the nations of the earth. I believe that every city, every state, every Island, and every village will be forced to make a decision, are you for, or against the nation of Israel?” –Mike Bickle*
  - b. This isn’t a Messianic thing; this is a glory of God thing, an end of the age thing, a potential apostasy for the gentile Church if they don’t get it right thing. It’s not Periphery issue, but a front and center issue.

#### IV. ISRAEL AND GOD’S GLORY

- A. Recently I was listening to that song by the Helsers, “No Longer Slaves.” The line that struck me in this song was, *“...You split the sea so I could walk right through it, my fears were drowned in perfect love...”* As I thought about this line, I thought to myself, is that the reason why God split the Red Sea? Is the reason so that we can walk through it, or is it because of His covenant that He cut with Abraham? Is it about God, or is it about us?
- B. The answer is yes, but which comes first? Beloved, God’s glory, God’s name, God’s faithfulness to the covenant must come first. If that doesn’t come first, then He can’t be trusted to split the sea for us.
- C. God’s commitment to the nation of Israel/us, is actually God’s commitment to God, His name and His nature, as a covenant keeping God.

#### V. TWO DITCHES REGARDING THE NATION OF ISREAL

- A. In **Romans 9-11**, Paul makes his strongest, ironclad argument for the future restoration of the nation of Israel in the whole of the New Testament. This entire argument is based upon God’s commitment to Abraham in **Romans 1-8**. But when Paul comes to the conclusion of **Romans 11**, there are two things that Paul warns us about, as well as something profound that happens to Paul in the middle of this defense;

1. Ignorance—Paul warns us that if our ignorance of Israel and Jewish people continues, it can lead us into arrogance. As we approach the season of Jesus’ return, God is going to put the whole earth on tilt for the sake of Israel and the Jewish people, as He raises up an end-time Pharaoh to afflict Israel and bring them once again to a place of desperation as they call out for Him.
  - a. This pressure, this mixture of glory and trouble will either move God’s family towards humility regarding the Jewish people, or away from Him in arrogance. The concerning part is that I would suggest the majority of God’s family is here today, in a place of ignorance regarding the future restoration of the nation of Israel.
2. Sentiment—The other side of the ditch is that we simply become enamored with all things Jewish to the determinate of seeing, following and loving what Jesus loves. Beloved, today the nation of Israel, per-capita is the largest unreached people group on earth. This means that the majority of them are lost, without Christ.
  - a. We don’t want for Israel what Israel wants for Israel; we want for Israel what Jesus wants for Israel. Part of God sending the anti-Christ into the earth will be to fulfill a desire that Israel has had for an earthly king, just like they asked for Saul. And they will get one, one who will greatly persecute them.
  - b. But if our love for Israel is solely based on sentiment for them, when pressure comes both to us and them, where will we stand. Will we fight on their behalf, will we carry the promise for them, in the same way that they did for us, or will we close our blinds and go back to life as normal?
  - c. Will we be offended at Him saying His actions against Israel are too great? Will we accuse God of doing too much? Will we assume that God would never do this, and therefore attribute God’s power and actions against them as solely satan’s rage?
  - d. Over the past 15 years being around people that love Israel, I have largely found that folks tend to have more excitement about Jewish life, than they are struck with wonder, awe, and the majesty and scope of Jesus and His purpose at the end of this age.
3. Worship—What happens to Paul at the conclusion of this agreement for the future restoration of Israel is what God desires for everyone that touches both His glory and His commitment to the Jewish people—WORSHIP—Then sacrificial living!

## **VI. START TODAY**

- A. Maybe Israel is a new subject to you, maybe this is something that you haven’t thought about, then let today be the day, when you bow yourself before the God of glory and ask Him to lead you into the truth of His Word. Let today be the day when you start asking Him how He feels about the nation of Israel, about the city of Jerusalem, and how you can start today by making progress in understanding the mystery of God to Israel.
  1. This will take time, this will be a process, it wont happen in days, but in years, and in decades, but beloved where life is headed, you want to start now, not later. There will be great perils later on to try and understand this massive truth.

2. **Jeremiah 12:5**—if you can't run with the footman, how will you run with the horses. How will you run when the horses take off?
- B. **Romans 11:33**—Paul ends with song, he ends this portion singing, his hearts on fire, he's in humility, he's bowed down, he's so smart, so astute, so filled with revelation, and he's just gone....like toast, and all he can do is sing.
- C. Beloved this is the aim of our lives also, that we too bow in humility before God and His revealed purpose for the nation of Israel.
- D. As you make it a point to pray for them, to ask God about His heart for them, the most genius thing takes place.... you start falling in love with them. You start to think about them. You start to look at the them differently. You see their story in the Bible as something that's not separated from yours, but actually the reason why you have faith in Christ, you become caring, you become concerned, you become involved with them.