

# Tzedakah Times

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## Israel and Eschatology

The study of Israel and the end times is difficult. And this article will not state categorically the how and when of Messiah's return – because only God knows (Mark 13:28-37). We can affirm, however, the truth that Jesus will return one day as King and Lord (Rev. 19:11-16). And on that day everyone (even Satan and his demons) will proclaim that Jesus is Messiah and God (Phil. 2:5-11).

But before we rejoice (and rejoice we should!) over that wonderful day to come, we must never forget that we as Christians owe our opportunity for heaven to a Jewish carpenter from Nazareth. Jesus was Jewish, through the line of David, and we must acknowledge that He came first and foremost for His own people (Rom. 1:16).

So what role does Israel play in the end times? Short answer – EVERYTHING! But in order for you to show your Jewish friends and family how much Jesus loves them, let's look at the longer answer.

The "rest of the story" found in Revelation actually began in Genesis 12:1-3. God promised Abraham not only a family and nation but also that this nation would be a blessing to all peoples. This family, the Jewish people, was set apart for holiness' sake (Lev. 20:24-26), not to keep the truth for themselves, but so that in their righteousness they will be "for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:6). The Gospel was first for

the Jewish people, but the Gospel was also sent to the Gentiles as well (Acts 10).

And now today we find that the vast majority of Christians are Gentiles and that Jewish believers in Jesus comprise only 1% of the entire Jewish race. However, we must remember two promises of God that relate directly to the final climax of history. First, God promised that there would be a remnant of Israel that would be saved (Rom. 9:27) and second, the message would return to Israel after the "fullness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25).

We do not know who is in the remnant and so we must provoke every Jewish person we can to be jealous for Jesus (Rom. 11:11). Gentile Christians must also recognize that when "our time" is complete, the end approaches. The last days are for the Jewish people. They are God's people and He will bring to Himself all Jewish people who believe Jesus is the Messiah. So we who know, must go and tell for the time is short and the message is eternity.

Amy Downey

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE . . .

Do Old Testament Laws Still Apply Today?

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## Do Old Testament Laws Still Apply Today?

One of the first questions a Jewish person faces upon receiving Jesus as Messiah is whether or not to keep the Old Testament laws. Most Jewish believers understand that the law was a “tutor” (Gal. 3) and that salvation has nothing to do with keeping Kosher. However, many still feel the need to *confirm* their Jewishness through “keeping” the Torah.

Therefore, it is important to not judge anyone as “legalistic” who chooses to observe Jewish traditions. For many Jewish believers it is a way to connect to their Jewish heritage in a way that they had never done. However, if a Jewish believer chooses to go to a traditional church and eat a “BLT” for lunch, they should not be considered as less than what they are – a Jewish person who has received Jesus as Messiah.

Because the answer to the title question is both “Yes” and “No.” We as believers in Jesus (Jew or Gentile) should observe and practice the moral laws (i.e., Exodus 20). However, the ceremonial laws dealing with sacrifices and Temple worship were fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-20) by the death and resurrection of Jesus and cannot be followed.

Any attempt to develop a complete answer to this question is impossible. The Laws of Moses were given by God for perpetuity. The means of observance is the question that each Jewish (and Gentile) believer must answer for themselves. The important thing is to remember that the Law can never save – that is the job of the Messiah Jesus.

## Prayer and Praise

- Mary\* continues to be curious about Jesus. Please pray that Mary will progress from interest to relationship with Messiah Jesus.
- Larry\* is a college student who was in a recent Tzedakah Ministries college chapel service. Please pray that the work begun in chapel will result in Larry's salvation.
- Morty\* is a college professor who heard the Gospel from a student who had attended a Jewish Evangelism Workshop. Pray that the seeds planted will result in Morty's salvation.
- John\* recently heard the Gospel for the first time from a Christian man who had been his friend for 50+ years. The man had wanted to share the Gospel but was unsure what to say to his Jewish friend. Amy worked with him on how to share the Gospel and for the first time John heard how to be saved.
- Joanna\* is the sister-in-law of a recent Jewish Evangelism Workshop attendee. Martha\* is using the lessons from the workshop to her faith with Joanna.
- Jason\* is the brother-in-law of a Christian worker in Arkansas. Please pray for Shanda\* as she proclaims Jesus to her family members

\*Names have been changed.

## COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE ...

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Answering the Unanswerable ... Holocaust