



Operation Exodus USA
From Hope to Home

The Restoration of All Things

Authored by Merrill Bolender



A Christian ministry assisting Jewish people moving to Israel



The Restoration of All Things

“For He (Jesus) must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through His holy prophets.”

Acts 3:21 NLT

It is important to have a clear understanding of the place Israel has in God’s plan of redemptive history. Without a revelation of Israel’s prophetic role, it is impossible to understand rightly, what the Bible says about the present and future—including the return of Jesus Christ, the triumph of His Kingdom on earth and the culmination of God’s plan for the ages.

“Look at the fig tree, and all the trees; as soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation* will not pass away till all has taken place.

Luke 21:29-33 ESV

Numerous Bible scholars interpret the fig tree in this parable, also found in Matthew 24:32-33, as the nation of Israel. The fact that it is budding represents being in the Land – being restored as a nation.

Today, the miracle of Israel’s restoration is taking place right before our very eyes. Millions of Jewish people have returned to the land God promised them thousands of years ago. A slow trickle of Jewish people “*making Aliyah,*” the modern term for a Jewish person living

*In Greek, not necessarily a certain number of years, but a "people or nation", IE: The nation of Israel.

in the nations who immigrates to Israel, began in the late 1800s. The flow of new immigrants has increased dramatically since Israel was declared a nation in 1948. This is in fulfillment of countless prophecies throughout the Old Testament and confirmed by the words of Jesus recorded in Luke and Matthew. (*See Scripture references listed on pages 14-16.*)

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Romans 11:25 ESV

The Apostle Paul taught that ignorance concerning God’s plans and promises for Israel would lead the Gentiles to be wise in their own opinions. We truly need to understand the “mystery of Israel” — past, present, and future.

In Romans 11, Paul teaches that God is not finished with national Israel. Promises made to Abraham are yet to be fulfilled. There are major threads of biblical prophecy tied to Israel. Understanding this theme, woven throughout all of Scripture, is essential to having a right understanding of where history is headed.

Chapters 9-11 of Romans is often overlooked by modern teachers and preachers. *Art Katz said, “*Untold numbers of ministers have gone their whole lifetime never having preached from these texts* (Romans chapters 9–11).

*Art Katz was an American author, preacher, and teacher who passed away in 2007. He was known for his writings on Christianity, Jewish roots, and end-time prophecy. He had a unique perspective on Israel and the Church, emphasizing the significance of Israel in God’s redemptive plan and the need for the Church to understand its Hebraic roots. His writing often challenge readers to consider their own spiritual journey and the importance of a deeper understanding of the Scriptures.

Peter Tsukahira, in his book, *God's Tsunami*, states that “*these three chapters are not parenthetical to what Paul had been teaching in Chapters 1-8 (as is often taught), nor are they merely something that Paul just “tacked on” to his teaching. They are pivotal to bring understanding of Paul’s teachings on the whole book of Romans.*”

Author *Krister Stendahl rightly points out “*Romans 9-11 is not an appendix to chapters 1-8, but the climax of the letter.*” These chapters are crucial for understanding the Apostle Paul’s theology and his vision of the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. They also play a pivotal role in shaping Christian perspectives on the relationship between the Church and Israel, particularly in the area of covenant and promise fulfillment. As such, Stendahl’s observation underscores the significance of Romans 9-11 in providing essential insights into the theological message of the entire Book of Romans.

In fact, Paul’s revelation about the restoration of his brethren, Israel, brought the greatest rejoicing found in all of Paul’s writings: “*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen* (Romans 11:33-36).

*Krister Stendahl was a prominent Swedish theologian and New Testament scholar. He was born on April 21, 1921, in Sweden, and passed away on April 15, 2008, in Boston, Massachusetts. He held various academic positions, including serving as Dean of Harvard Divinity School from 1968 to 1979. Stendahl was a prolific author and contributed significantly to Biblical studies and ecumenical theology.

How Did This Happen?

If you look at the real world of nature through a red lens, everything colored blue will look black. This is comparable to interpreting Scripture through the distorting lens of false presuppositions. To say that God has rejected the Jewish people—that He has revoked His covenants and promises concerning their restoration to a prophetic role and destiny, transferring all these blessings to the Church — is to turn that which the Bible says is blue into something black.

Roman era believers were steeped in Greek philosophy. The predominant worldview of Christian thinking was heavily influenced by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In their interpretation of the Scriptures, they did not have a Hebraic mindset but spiritualized and allegorized their understanding of the Scriptures. From their human reasoning, it made sense that God was finished with the Jews and turned to the Gentiles to form the “new people of God.”

By the end of the second century AD, the Church was progressively becoming transformed theologically. The church fathers rejected the Jewish branches of the *Olive Tree* (See Romans Chapter 11), and intentionally cut herself off from her Jewish roots. Paul warned the believers at Rome, in regards to having an arrogant attitude toward the Jewish “natural” branches. (Romans 11:20-21).

The biblical error of Replacement Theology, (supercessionism), was birthed. Replacement Theology views the Church as the *New Israel*. The term, New Israel, coined by Justin Martyr around 160 AD, is found nowhere in Scripture. Today’s doctrines were shaped by early church fathers who lived in the first centuries of Christianity. Our

prejudice distorts our perspective. Through the centuries, various church leaders continued teaching that the Jews were under judgment, rejected, and lost. These anti-Semitic teachings, led to millions of Jewish people throughout the centuries to be minimized, debased, and even slaughtered by the Church.

The basic tenets of Replacement Theology are:

- Israel (the Jewish people and the land) has been replaced by the Christian Church in the purposes of God, or, more precisely, the Church is the historic continuation of Israel to the exclusion of the former.
- The Jewish people are no longer a “people chosen by God.” In fact, they are no different from any other group such as the English, Spanish, or Africans.
- The Jewish people as a nation have no future, no hope, and no calling in the plan of God.
- Since Pentecost of Acts 2, the term “Israel,” as found in the Bible, now refers to the Church according to the replacement theologians.
- As a result of teachings, the biblical promises, covenants, and blessings *originally* ascribed to Israel have now been taken away from the Jews and instead given to the church. The Jewish people are then hopelessly subject to the curses found in the Bible because of their rejection of Christ.

From Cursed To Blessed

“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 12:2-3 NLT

God has promised to bless those who bless Israel and curse those who dishonor or lightly esteem Israel. When we look honestly at Romans 11 and test it with Genesis 12:2-3, we face the truth that the Church’s teaching of Replacement Theology, ultimately led to atrocities committed against the Jews throughout history.

Ironically, scripturally, it is the church that came under the promised curse of Genesis 12:3 by their attitude and actual treatment of the Jews! The complete restoration of the church will not be established until it recognizes, admits, and repents of its long-standing history of teaching the theological and biblical error of Replacement Theology.

When the church came under the Genesis 12 curse, the light of revelation faded. Understanding of the truth of God’s Word was greatly diminished and misinterpreted. The glory that was on the early Church lifted, and the dark ages tragically set in.

Because most of the church has this blemished history, it will remain cursed with theological and denominational division until it restores its relationship with Israel. The church must acknowledge Israel’s significant role and calling in God’s end-time prophecy.

The fulfillment of God’s promises and His redemptive plan can be achieved through genuine repentance, prayer, and teaching the truth of God’s Word. The Church must walk in partnership with God by actively supporting Israel, *by standing* with her people and building relationships of trust. Furthermore, the LORD gave the Church a mandate* to help Jewish people return to the land of

Israel—thereby contributing to the fulfillment of God’s eternal plans and purposes. The Church, then, can move forward in unity and full power.

Israel and the Church both have a divine destiny that they must and will fulfill. The call to action is for the Church to participate with God and actively engage in the restoration of both the Church and Israel. By fulfilling its unique calling, the Church plays a key role to help bring about the restoration of Israel’s irrevocable destiny, which is a key component to world redemption. Let us all unite, pray, and act for the restoration of both the Church and Israel.

It is necessary for the Church to have a humble attitude toward the Jewish people and the nation of Israel.

Let us pause and quiet our heart. Let us pray.

Prayer for Revelation

Dear Lord, Give us “revelation” from the Word of God. Remove the scales from our eyes. Heal any blindness that keeps us from understanding the times in which we live. Help us walk in the light of Your Word. Reveal to us where we have compromised Your words of admonition. Help us to repent and turn to Your sacred Word for light and understanding. Heavenly Father, it says in James 4:6, “*God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.*” We take the first step and humble ourselves so we can hear and understand Your Word and Your ways. May we love You and seek You with all our heart. Open our understanding so we may comprehend the Scriptures and be willing to be obedient to Your Word. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen

**See Isaiah 49 Mandate on page 14*

Restoration To The Land

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

Romans 11:29 ESV

The Scriptures provide a clear record that God made an irrevocable covenant gifting the “Promised Land” to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (named Israel).

***On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram saying,
“To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to
the great river, the river Euphrates...”***

Genesis 15:18 ESV

***“...for to you (Isaac) and to your offspring I will give
all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore
to Abraham your father.”***

Genesis 26:3 ESV

***“The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you
(Jacob/Israel), and I will give the land to your offspring after you.”***

Genesis 35:12 ESV

The Scriptures also warned the Israelites that if they failed to live by the basic moral code God provided, if they were unfaithful to God by worshipping other gods and adopting their vile forms of worship, if they did not heed the prophets’ calls to repentance, they would then be evicted from the Land as a drastic punishment. This judgment was ultimately meant to turn their hearts back to Him. Almost every prophet, beginning with Moses, trumpeted this message at various times.

***“But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear but are
drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare
to you...You shall not live long in the land that you are
going over the Jordan to enter and possess.”***

Deut. 30:17-18 ESV

We know this happened through the Babylonian invasion circa 586BC.

But God had also already prophesied through Moses that when the punishment had fulfilled its purpose, the LORD would then bring them back to the Land. Most of the biblical prophets and the rest of human history confirms that God keeps His covenants.

“And when all these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse...then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and He will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you... the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it.”

Deuteronomy 30:1-4 ESV

Jesus prophesied the Roman army’s destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the Jewish people in the gospels: (See: Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13). However, the Scriptures also give clear testimony that He will return to a Jerusalem inhabited by Jewish people. This indicates another regathering of His brethren according to the flesh to their original homeland guaranteed by God to Abraham.

“Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when it shall no longer be said, “As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but, “As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where He had driven them.” For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers.”

Jer. 16:14-15 ESV

The Jewish people throughout the centuries have viewed the Exodus out of Egypt as the greatest miracle ever performed by the LORD. Jeremiah prophesied an Aliyah so great that it will eclipse both the first exodus from Egypt and the partial return from Babylon. It is happening now! The modern-day Zionist movement began with Theodor Herzl at the end of the 19th century. It has gained

momentum with various historic stages of Jews returning to the land in the 20th century from Russia, Europe, and many other parts of the world. This amazing global move of God bringing Jewish people back to the land in our times is, unfortunately and tragically, not recognized by many believers.

God's calling to Israel, as a nation, and His gift of the land of Israel to them are *irrevocable*. Israel is *finally* being restored as a people living in the land God promised them. He is faithful!

“Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away, say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.”

Jeremiah 31:10 ESV

Ezekiel 36 provides the most comprehensive summary of God's covenant promises to restore the exiled people to the Land and to Himself, including the reason for the exile, but culminating in the triumph of His mercy and redemptive power to restore them. In this chapter, the Sovereign Lord, speaking through the prophet, says over 20 times: “I will.”

V.19 “So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. V.20 When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of His land.’ V.21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. V.22 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. V.23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord,” says the Lord God, “when

I am hallowed in you before their eyes. V.24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. V.25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. V.26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. V.27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. V.28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. V.29 I will deliver you from all your uncleanness's. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. V.30 And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. V.31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. V.32 Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!" V.33 'Thus says the Lord God: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. V.34 The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. V.35 So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' V.36 Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it." V.37 'Thus says the Lord God: "I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. V.38 Like a flock offered as holy sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.'"

Scriptures quoted above are taken from the NKJB (The New King James Bible Version)

Let us pray in response to the Word of the Lord:

Lord, forgive us if we have been among the scoffers and mockers concerning Your Word about Your covenants and the prophetic destiny and purposes You ordained for the Jew in the end-times. Soften our hearts and open our understanding so we can be aligned with Your full purposes in this hour of history. Give us Your heart for the Jewish people and Your eyes to understand Your Word concerning them. Show us the role You desire for us to play in bringing about Your redemptive purposes in Israel as well as in all the world. In Jesus name, Amen.

Our repentance and change of heart will begin removing the curse of divisions in the church world.

Let us consider the following excerpts from *Derek White of Christian Friends of Israel, UK:

“As the conflict in and around Israel continues and even worsens, there is the danger that an ever-increasing number of Christians will turn against the clear, simple meaning of the Scripture concerning the return of the Jews to their land, and accept replacement theology. Not only will this cause the Church to abandon the Jews as a nation (Israel), but will, according to the plain teachings of the New Testament, expose her to the displeasure and judgment of God, resulting in unspeakable loss.”

The Church is at a critical crossroads. The day of neutrality is a thing of the past. In the words of Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, “The opposite of love is not hatred, it is indifference . . . to remain silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all”

*Derek White is retired from a previous position as Director of Christian Friends of Israel, UK.

The Fruit of Repentance

Every believer that loves Israel is a blessed person. Everyone that rejects, opposes, or hates the Jewish people is under a curse. This can be an individual, local church, organization, denomination, king, kingdom, nation, or world empire.

It is as certain as the natural law of gravity. The principle never changes whether done knowingly or in ignorance, whether saint or sinner.

The Church's repentance and change of heart will begin removing the curse of divisions in the church world.

True repentance brings forth fruit (Luke 19:1-9). As we pro-actively find ways to bless Israel, these actions, which are the fruit of repentance, will release a blessing and anointing on the Church.

When the curse is lifted off the present divided church, the Church will be restored beyond her former glory.

***How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together
in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running
down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.***

Psalms 133:1-3 NIV

The Isaiah 49:22 Mandate

Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up My hand to the Gentile nations and set up My standard and raise high My signal banner to the peoples; and they will bring your sons in the bosom of their garments, and your daughters will be carried upon their shoulders.

Isaiah 49:22 AMPC

Operation Exodus USA has a mandate from the Lord to encourage and assist Jewish people in returning to the land of Israel. First and foremost, we are an intercessory ministry called to a prophetic task. We believe God is drawing Jewish people back to the land of Israel in fulfillment of biblical prophecy (Isaiah 43:5–6) and that the Gentiles (the church) are called to assist in their return (Isaiah 49:22).

Scripture shows us that God’s eternal plan for Israel and His commitment to restore His first-born Israel are of the utmost importance to the LORD! The Aliyah (return of His people demonstrates God’s holiness, everlasting love, and faithfulness to the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

At this crucial juncture in the history of the Church, we invite you to be an active participant in the gathering of God’s people. Aliyah is a holy work unto the LORD. Together, let us proclaim God’s Kingdom purposes for their return, for His Glory and for His Holy Name’s Sake!

*Scripture references (page 1):

“Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when it shall no longer be said, ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As the LORD lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and

out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers.” Jeremiah 16:14-15

...then say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. Ezekiel 37:21-22

In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Isaiah 11:11-12

Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, Isaiah 43:5-6

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.” Zechariah 8:7-8

I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men. He who opens the breach goes

up before them; they break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their King passes on before them, the LORD at their head. Micah 2:12-13

They shall go after the Lord; he will roar like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west; they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will return them to their homes, declares the Lord. Hosea 11:10-11

“...Behold, at that time I will deal with your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the Lord. Zephaniah 3:19-20

I will rejoice in doing them good and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41

“I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,” says the Lord your God. Amos 9:14-15

Scriptures quoted above are taken from the ESV Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Merrill Bolender,
Area Representative, Operation Exodus USA

Merrill and Donna Bolender have been involved in Jewish ministry since 1980.

They lived and worked in Israel nearly three years during the 1980's. In 1985-86 they went to Russia on behalf of the "refuseniks" (Jews who were refused the right to immigrate to Israel).

They began reading about Gustav Scheller and the work of Ebenezer Operation Exodus in assisting Jews out of the land of the north. In 2002 they attended an Ebenezer Conference and wept for three days. The Lord was confirming that they were to be involved in assisting Jewish people back to the land. They retired from their business and went to Ukraine as intercessors for six months in 2004. They went on five sailings that year from Odessa, Ukraine to Haifa, Israel with Jewish immigrants.

In 2006 they became area representatives for Operation Exodus USA in their state of Indiana raising up intercessory prayer groups and participating in OEUSA intercessory prayer by phone and Zoom.

Merrill authored the book, *WHEN THE CROSS BECAME A SWORD: The Origin and Consequences of Replacement Theology*. The English version is in its tenth printing. It presently printed in a total of sixteen languages and is being made available on six continents.

Currently, Merrill and Donna reside in a retirement community in Indianapolis, Indiana. They are servants of the Lord. They come from ordinary backgrounds with an undeniable calling on their lives.



Operation Exodus USA

Operation Exodus USA is a Christian ministry assisting Jewish people moving to Israel from the USA. We are affiliated with Operation Exodus International, a ministry started in the United Kingdom in 1991 by Gustav Scheller. There are representatives in over 52 countries around the world. Together, we have assisted over 200,000 Jewish people moving to Israel from many different nations.

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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*