

Hope, Not Hype **Discussion Notes - June 14, 2026**

1. Growing up, what did you learn - in church, school, or at home - about Israel and its relationship to Christians today? Did those ideas ever feel confusing or contradictory?

The sermon "Hope, Not Hype" navigates two dangerous extremes Christians often fall into regarding Israel: either dismissing God's covenant promises to the Jewish people entirely, or uncritically endorsing every action of the modern Israeli state. Through four pillars - Promise, Prayer, Prophecy, and People - the sermon builds a biblical case that God has a real, ongoing future for Israel, fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ. Genesis 12:3 is a gospel promise pointing to Jesus, not a political contract; Romans 11 describes a temporary hardening on Israel with a promised future turning to their Messiah; and the church has not replaced Israel, but is grafted into the same olive tree by the same faith. The call lands on two hands, one knee: a genuine, hope-filled love for Israel alongside singular allegiance to Christ alone - because the future God has for Israel runs straight through Jesus, the same door everyone comes through.

Read Acts 3:19-21

"Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago." (ESV)

Peter is preaching in the temple courts to a Jewish crowd, just after healing a lame man at the Beautiful Gate. His appeal is directed specifically to Israel, calling them to repentance so that the "times of refreshing" and the "restoration of all things" may come. Crucially, Peter ties Israel's restoration directly to their turning to Jesus - the Christ "appointed for you." This is not a separate path alongside Christ; it is the path through Christ. The restoration Israel has longed for and the gospel are not two different hopes running on parallel tracks - they are one hope, one door, one Messiah.

2. The sermon described Israel's future as inseparable from turning to Christ - not a separate track, but the same door everyone comes through. How does Peter's message in Acts 3 challenge or confirm what you have believed about what "blessing Israel" actually means?

Read Psalm 122:6

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! 'May they be secure who love you!'" (ESV)

Psalm 122 is one of the Songs of Ascent - psalms sung by Jewish pilgrims making their way up to Jerusalem for the great feasts. Written by David, it celebrates Jerusalem as the place where the tribes gather, where judgment is administered, and where the house of the Lord stands. The prayer for Jerusalem's peace is genuine and heartfelt, rooted in covenant love for the city God chose. But as the sermon noted, the deepest peace any city or people can experience is found in the Prince of Peace himself - which means the most loving prayer for Jerusalem is not merely political stability, but the shalom that comes only through Christ.

3. The sermon called us to hold "hope, not hype" - loving Israel without pledging blind allegiance to every political action, and keeping Christ as our singular King. What does it look like in your daily life - in conversations, on social media, or in how you take in the

news - to pray for Israel's peace without losing sight of where that peace ultimately comes from?

Read Acts 1:6-7

"So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.'" (ESV)

This exchange takes place just before Jesus ascends into heaven. The disciples, themselves as Jewish men, ask a question that was entirely natural for them: will you now restore the kingdom to Israel? Jesus does not dismiss the question or tell them the premise is wrong. He simply removes the timeline from their hands. The restoration of Israel is real. Jesus never denies it. But the timing is God's alone to determine. This liberates us from the anxious task of managing prophecy through politics and frees us to do what Jesus says next: be witnesses, starting right where we are.

4. Jesus never denies that Israel has a future - he just says the timing belongs to the Father. What would it look like for the church to hold genuine hope for Israel without feeling responsible for making prophecy happen? Where do you see Christians crossing that line, and what pulls them there?

Read Romans 11:28-29

"As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (ESV)

Paul has just laid out the olive tree metaphor. Gentiles are grafted in, Israel temporarily set aside and now closes this section with a stunning declaration about the character of God: His gifts and His calling are irrevocable. He does not take them back. "They are beloved for the sake of their forefathers" - meaning God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still stands, not because of Israel's merit or political power, but because God keeps His word. This is the bedrock of "hope, not hype" - the hope is not grounded in news cycles or military outcomes, but in the unchanging faithfulness of God to His covenant promises.

5. The sermon closed with "two hands, one knee" - you can hold real hope for Israel while keeping your allegiance fixed on Christ alone. What would it look like this week to live that out - in your prayers, your conversations, or how you engage with what you see online?

Prayer Points

- For Jewish people to come to know Jesus as their Messiah
- For the peace of Jerusalem, and for all who are caught in the conflict in that land
- For our own hearts - that our allegiance stays fixed on Christ when the world pressures us to pledge to a side

DEEPER DIVE: Paul - A Life of Hope, Not Hype

Few lives illustrate the sermon's tension more sharply than the apostle Paul. Born a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee from the tribe of Benjamin, Paul was as Jewish as it gets; and he never stopped being Jewish. Yet his encounter with the risen Jesus completely reoriented what his Jewishness meant. He became the man who wrote the most tender, anguished words in all of Scripture on behalf of his kinsmen who had not yet believed and simultaneously the man who declared, without apology, that there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. His life is a lived-out answer to the question the sermon raises: is it possible to love Israel deeply, hold God's promises for them seriously, and still make Christ the singular King of your allegiance? Paul's answer is yes - and the three passages below show how he did it.

Read Philippians 3:4-9

"...though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I count as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith." (ESV)

Paul is writing to the church at Philippi, warning against those who place their confidence in Jewish identity markers rather than in Christ. Rather than argue from the outside, Paul lays out his own credentials - and they are impeccable: circumcised on the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, blameless under the law. No one could outrank him on those terms. Then he does something stunning: he calls all of it "loss" and "rubbish" compared to knowing Christ Jesus. This is not self-hatred or a rejection of his Jewish heritage. Paul is making a statement about ultimate allegiance. The things he once counted as spiritual assets - his identity, his pedigree, his law-keeping - he now holds with open hands, because Christ is of surpassing worth. This is what singular allegiance looks like in a Jewish man who still loves his people.

Read Romans 11:1-5

"I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? 'Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.' But what is God's reply to him? 'I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace." (ESV)

Paul opens Romans 11 with the most personal argument possible: himself. Has God rejected Israel? Paul points to his own existence as a counter-argument - he is an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, and he is saved. Then he reaches back to the story of Elijah, who thought he was the only faithful one left - and God corrected him: there were 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Paul draws the parallel: even now, at the present time, there is a remnant of Israel chosen by grace. God has not abandoned His people. He never operates without a faithful remnant, and that remnant is the evidence that His covenant has not failed.

Read Romans 11:33-36

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?’ ‘Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?’ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” (ESV)

Romans 11:33-36 is Paul’s conclusion to three of the most theologically dense chapters he ever wrote. After wrestling with the mystery of Israel’s hardening, God’s sovereignty, and the future of both Jews and Gentiles, Paul does not land on a political prescription or a prophetic timeline - he lands in worship. “How unsearchable are his judgments, and how inscrutable his ways!” This is not a dodge; it is a posture. Paul has traced the argument as far as human reasoning can go, and then he lifts his hands. The mystery of Israel’s future belongs to God, and the right response to that mystery is not anxiety or political maneuvering - it is adoration. This is what “hope, not hype” looks like in practice: holding the promise firmly, leaving the timeline in God’s hands, and worshipping the One who holds it all.

Deeper Dive Discussion Questions

1. Paul listed his Jewish credentials as things he once counted as spiritual gain, then called them loss for the sake of Christ. What are the things in your own life - identity, background, reputation, achievements - that you might be tempted to count as spiritual currency? How does Philippians 3 reframe that?
2. Paul used himself as living proof that God has not rejected Israel. He saw his own salvation as evidence of God’s faithfulness to His covenant people. How does that change the way you think about what it means to be a witness - not just to the gospel, but to the faithfulness of God?
3. Paul’s response to the deep mystery of Israel’s future was a doxology, not a debate. What would it look like for Christians today to respond to hard theological questions about Israel with worship rather than political anxiety or tribalism?