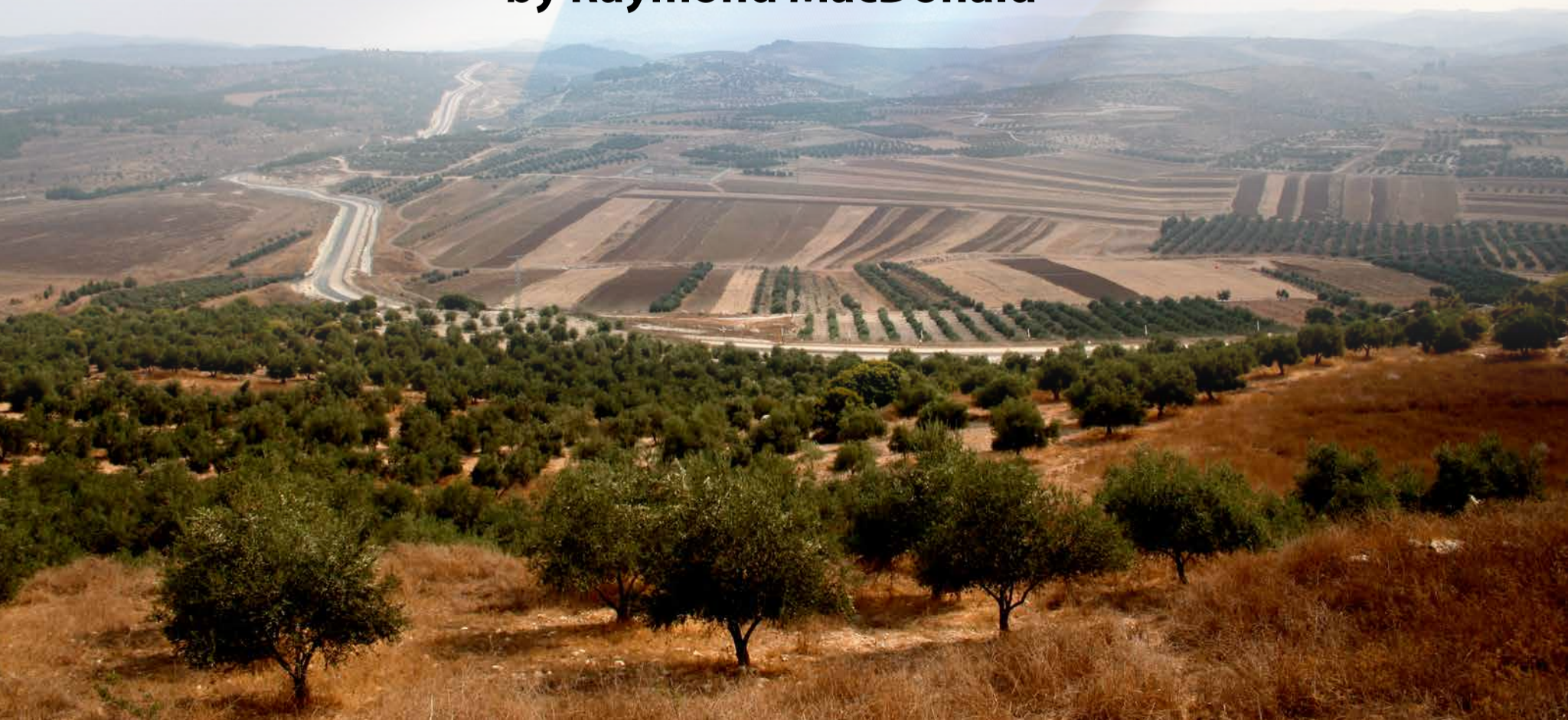


# Why Christians Should Support Israel

**A Guide from Christian Friends of Leket Israel**

**by Raymond MacDonald**



In a quote that is usually attributed to 4th century Christian leader Augustine, it was said about the Bible: **“In the Old Testament the New is concealed, in the New the Old is revealed.”** When you sit down to read a novel, you wouldn’t start reading from the back to find out how it ends. In fact, without knowing the beginning, the end probably wouldn’t make any sense to you. If we take Augustine literally, I think that’s sort of like reading a book starting at the back.

Perhaps Augustine can be construed to be advocating for a common belief, which is widely held today that the New Testament is all you need. In the New Testament God expresses His love through Jesus’ ministry and death. The Old Testament with its harsh laws and commandments can be left for the Jews some think. One prominent Christian leader went as far as to say: “Peter, James, and Paul elected to unhitch the Christian faith from their Jewish scriptures, and my friends, we must as well.”

This sounds similar to the heresy propagated by a 2nd century teacher, Marcion of Sinope. He created a doctrine named after himself which falsely taught that the Old Testament must be done away with by Christians. He taught that the God of Old Testament was not even the same God who brought Jesus into the world. He regarded the God of the New Testament to be different from the cruel God of Israel depicted in the Old Testament.

We know that God does not change. We will see in this short study that, regarding Israel, there’s a seamless flow of understanding from the Old Testament and the New Testament. However, most theologians have no problem seeing Israel as God’s Covenant people in the Old Testament but with the New Testament that changed. With the death of Jesus that stopped and now it’s the Church. In fact, for centuries “Christians” persecuted Jews thinking they were doing God’s work in punishing them for murdering Jesus. Most Jews are familiar with this aspect of Christian history. It’s something with which Christians should acquaint themselves as well!

In Romans chapters 9 - 11 Paul is writing to Gentile followers of Jesus in Rome specifically about Israel and the Jewish people. In 11:28-29 we see three reasons why Christians should support Israel.

*“Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”*

Romans 11:28-29

Israel still matters to God right now in the Church age. Earlier in Romans we read:

*“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.”* Romans 3:1-2

This is not the Old Testament we are reading; this is the New Testament!

This is foundational. The Gospel, the entire word of God rests on God’s call upon Abraham. Without this calling Moses would not have appeared on the scene. David would never have become king. And Jesus never would have been born and never would’ve had the momentous impact that he has had on the entire human race!

We all know that God made certain promises to Abraham that he said were everlasting. God reiterated those promises to Abraham’s son, Isaac and to Abraham’s grandson, Jacob. The Jewish people are God’s covenant people. This is what Paul is affirming here.

Do these words sound familiar? Perhaps we’ve heard them before in Deuteronomy.

*“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”* Deuteronomy 7:6-8

Our God, Israel’s God is a promise keeping God! Aren’t you thankful that God does not love us because of our perfection?! No God loves us in spite of our imperfections. And so it is with Israel. God entered into a covenant with Abraham and his descendants and He, after so many centuries, is still working through the covenant in achieving His will because his promises never fail.

I’ve had the pleasure of visiting many major landmarks that represent the pinnacle of human achievement. I’ve been to Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome, the Parthenon in Athens, the Eiffel tower in Paris, the Capitol in Washington and many others. I’ve also been to the Kotel, the western wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. In as far as grandeur or spectacle honestly I must confess that the Kotel doesn’t quite measure up!

It reminds me a bit of the scene from the movie Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Near the end of the movie Indiana must pick the holy grail - the cup that Jesus drank from during his final evening with his disciples. On display were hundreds of ornate chalices but ultimately

Indiana selects a humble wooden cup. The crusader knight affirms “you chose wisely.”

That’s almost how Moses is describing Israel in these verses from Deuteronomy. The Jewish people were small numbers compared to the nations around them. They are surprisingly small in numbers even today. God didn’t select them because they were the worlds greatest architects. They were not selected because they were the most righteous. No, they were chosen by the Grace of God to be a special unique people and to bring a special unique message to the human race. They are the people of the book. THE BOOK.

The most precious thing that a human can possess is the Bible. The Bible was penned by Jewish hands. We, as Christians, must trust that God knew what he was doing! As Christians, we must express our thanks, not only to God but to the Jewish people as well.

Okay, so why did God select Israel?

*“It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Deuteronomy 9:5*

It is God’s reputation that is at stake. Is he a promise keeping God? Does he show mercy and grace? As far as Moses and Paul were concerned the election of Israel was based solely on the grace of God. There is nothing that Israel could do, there is nothing that we can do as Gentile believers, to experience that grace.

Paul in the New Testament is reaching back here in Romans thousands of years back to Moses and he affirms that God’s promises have not changed. They are still in effect.

*“...but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.” Romans 11:28*

Paul asks rhetorically: “I say then, has God cast away His people?”

His answer: *“Certainly not!”* Romans 11:1

God told Abraham in Genesis chapter 12:2-3 *“I’ll make you a great nation, I will bless you and I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who curse you, and through you all of the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

We see that the ultimate blessing that the Jewish people have been to mankind is Jesus. But we also see through history right up to the present day that the Jewish people collectively

have been a blessing to the human race. Their contributions to the arts, science medicine have been incalculable. Is this an expression of God's love to the Jewish people? Is this an expression of God's love to all of mankind? Absolutely!

In speaking to the gentile believers in the city of Rome, Paul is affirming that God has not abrogated his covenants with the Jewish people. Is he saying that God is faithful to keep his promises? He is saying you as Gentile followers of Jesus can absolutely trust God and his fidelity to his covenants because all you have to do is look at Israel. You can see that God is faithful to the Jewish people.

Earlier in Romans Paul says: *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Romans 8:38

It is important to realize that God is acting out of his own will. When we look back in a little bit more detail at God's original covenant with Abraham there's an important aspect we should consider. You may have heard of the expression "cut a covenant". It originates in the book of Genesis chapter 15.

God instructs him to bring a few animals. So He said to him, *"Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."* v9. He instructs Abraham to cut them down the middle and to separate the parts. As the sun was about to set a deep sleep fell upon Abraham.

Then *"And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram."* v 17-18

This was a common custom in ancient times when two people entered into an agreement, or a covenant. They would cut an animal in two and stand between the two halves and reach an agreement. In Genesis 15, the scene that we're looking at, where is Abraham? Only God is there in the form of a burning torch that passes between the animal parts. God is unilaterally making this covenant.

This covenant can be trusted because it is solely based on the character of God. He answers Abraham's question regarding how he can trust the covenant God is making with him and his descendants.

That's what the author of the book of Hebrews meant when he said: *"For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself."*  
Hebrews 6:13

Israel still matters to God today. As Christians, we can look at His relationship with Israel and the Jewish people and be assured that nothing can separate us from God's love and promises!

## **Irrevocable**

*"Who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen."* Romans 9:4-5

Think about this. This is simply incredible. They have been a great gift to mankind. Even God's Word the Bible was delivered to us through the Jewish people. And the greatest gift is Christ. It doesn't end there however. Jews through the centuries have been such a blessing in the arts, sciences and medicine. Even though they are one fifth of one percent of the world's population they have been awarded almost 20% of Nobel prizes.

Here in Romans 9 Paul is strongly arguing that the uniqueness of the Jewish people, their relationship to God, is not abolished in the New Testament. The gifts of God are irrevocable in regards to the Jewish people.

God's intent for Israel was to be the interface between God and man. Let's look again: Genesis chapter 12:2-3: *"I'll make you a great nation, I will bless you and I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who curse you, and through you all of the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

There's a lot of blessing there! Did you know that God wants to bless you? His conduit of bringing that last thing has been the Jewish people.

*"And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you*

*will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." Exodus 19:3-6*

What an awesome honor! What an awesome responsibility! But we see God's intention for the Jewish people, for the nation of Israel to be like an intermediary between God and the nations. The nation of Israel representing the nations to God.

It's no surprise then that when Jesus was in the region of Samaria and spoke to a woman there saying: *"You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."* John 4:22

As Gentile followers of Jesus, the foundations of our faith are in the Jewish people. They are God's covenant people. Jesus was first in those covenants. The covenant with Abraham Isaac and Jacob, the covenant of Mount Sinai, the covenant with David regarding the kingdom. Without any of that we would have no faith at all. And our salvation comes to us through the Jewish people.

The Bible that we love is a Jewish book. The creation story, the psalms of David, the proverbs of his son Solomon, the prophetic books, the gospels, the epistles and the revelation - all Jewish books. The holy land, the magnificent city of Jerusalem, the city that Jesus walked in the city to which he will return. The land of the Jewish people and landmarks in human history! The contributions to human history are simply immeasurable. The ramifications of God's relationship to the Jewish people are immeasurable... and irrevocable!

*"Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable."* Romans 11:28-29

But what about us Gentiles? If God's historic covenants have been made with the nation of Israel where does that put the Gentile world? Let's go back to Romans chapter 11:

*"For if the first-fruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree."* Romans 11:16-17

Israel is the cultivated olive tree, the nations who turn to Jesus for their salvation are like wild olive trees. We are grafted into that holy root which is God's covenant with Israel. Oh, the goodness and mercy of God!

*“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”* Ephesians 2: 11-13

You don't need to be Jewish to be in a right relationship with God. Through Jesus work upon the cross all of mankind can have a relationship with God even though we were not part of his ancient covenants.

It's important to note as well that Paul has a warning to Gentile believers: “Do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.” Romans 11:18

Again: *“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:*

*“The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

*For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”* Romans 11:25-27

As Christians if we reject these foundations, if we think the God is finished with the Jewish people, if we reject any relationship to the Jewish people then we are actually rejecting God himself. There is no room in the Church for Antisemitism.

There is no room in our theology for the notion that God is finished with the Jewish people. We need to include Israel in our salvation story and in our presentation of the gospel.

God's promises are irrevocable and that's good news for us! How do we know that our relationship to him is sound and secure? Well, we can look at the Jewish people, scattered to the four corners of the Earth for millennia and now returning to the land as God said it would be. We can look at the Jewish people and proclaim **“our God, their God, is a promise keeping God!”**

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Romans 8:35 & 38-39



Through Jesus' (son of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David) finished work upon the cross our relationship to God is secured!

*"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9*

**The Holy One of Israel cannot abandon his promises to the Jewish people and he cannot abandon his promises to you!**

# How Leket, Israel, the national food bank, feeds the needy in Israel

Our work is inspired by the commandment of "leket", which means to glean, found in Leviticus 19:9-10.

*"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God."*

This commandment allowed the poor of Israel to pick from the fields for food, it was this commandment which caused Boaz to allow Ruth to glean from the fields for herself and Naomi.

*"And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her." Ruth 2:15*

We follow this commandment in a modern way, using trucks and warehouses but with the same goal of making sure food from the fields makes it to those in need. Leket Israel began as a hot meal rescue operation. Every day our staff and volunteers collect thousands of hot meals from hotels, restaurants, corporate cafeterias, Israeli Defense Forces bases, and catered events for delivery to Israel's most needy!

Because of support from Christians like you, food of the highest quality is delivered for free to Holocaust survivors and struggling families. Over the years Leket Israel expanded into the rescue of agricultural produce and this year Leket Israel will rescue and redistribute over 60 million pounds of fresh produce from 500 farms to benefit Israel's needy.

All the food rescued by Leket Israel is delivered to 234,000 people each week through 265 non profit organizations. These include food banks, homeless shelters, senior citizen facilities and half way houses. When you support our work you are saying to the people of Israel as Ruth said to Naomi, "Your people shall be my people!"

**You can't live a full life on an empty stomach!**

Is God tugging on your heart to be involved in what He is doing in Israel?

<https://christianfriendsofleket.org>



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