

David Bond and David Zadok Questions and Answers

Israel, People, Land, Language etc

Question 1: What does Romans 11:26 mean when it says “All Israel will be saved”?

Because words should always be interpreted with and by their context, we need at the outset to understand what Paul means by “Israel” in the context of Romans 9-11. He makes his meaning clear in 9:3-4, where he defines “Israel” as his “countrymen according to the flesh”, namely the Jewish people. As Paul unfolds his argument through these three chapters, he consistently contrasts “Israel” with the Gentiles, again making it clear that by “Israel” he means the Jewish nation, scattered across the Roman world at that time, and scattered across the whole world today.

As to Romans 11:26, whilst some interpreters insist that “all Israel” means “all the elect” or “all the church”, Paul himself gives no indication in context of a momentary change of meaning from Israel, the Jewish nation, to Israel, the church. To suggest that he changes his meaning for just one or two verses, without giving any indication that he is doing so, is to engage in hermeneutical gymnastics. Paul is clearly speaking of a future time when the Jewish people, as a whole, will come to believe the gospel of the Messiah, in contrast to the present time in which only “a remnant according to the election of grace” believe.

As to the outcome, Paul explains in Romans 11:12-15 that if the partial exclusion of the Jewish people brought great riches through the gospel being preached to the Gentiles, their future full inclusion will bring even greater riches, through the gospel, to the Gentiles.

David Bond

Question 2: In Israel, is there any contact between Israeli Christians and Palestinian Christians or is that problematic?

A lot of wonderful things have happened between Jewish and Arab believers, particularly in the last seven years. First of all, CWI and I are much involved in trying to develop a Jewish/Arab discipleship programme in Hebrew and Arabic and we are planning in 2012 to have some seminars to bring the Jews and the Arabs together, incorporating discipleship and then asking each one to take the information back to their own churches and use that material.

My wife Eti is involved in Musallaha, a ministry dedicated to bringing Jewish and Palestinian believers together. She is part of a group of twelve Jewish Christians and twelve Arab Christians who try to meet together regularly.

The difficulty is that the Palestinians cannot come to Israel and the Israelis cannot go to the Palestinian Authority, so what the group usually usually does is to meet in

Cyprus, which is not very far. As a result of this a lot of really good things have been happening.

In January, HaGefen Publishing is planning to put on a book exhibition for Jews and Arabs in Nazareth, and this also is a very strong testimony to what God can do through Messiah to bring two peoples together. I also encourage you to read the book *Son of Hamas*. <http://astore.amazon.co.uk/cwiorguk-21/detail/1850788782> I highly recommend it because when you read it you will realise that the situation in Israel is not black and white; it is not a case that the Israelis alone are evil or that the Palestinians are. You can see that both sides are sinners.

Question 3: I receive the magazine of another mission which insists that the Jewish people will only take notice of the Scriptures in the Masoretic text and they reject the idea that the scriptures being translated into modern Hebrew? (This question arose out of David's talk in which he told the audience that he was involved in the publishing of the Bible in modern Hebrew.)

I can relate to that, and one of the things I always say is that the Jewish people have the privilege of being able to read the Scripture in the original Hebrew language. There is a lot of benefit in being able to read the Word of God in the original language.

However, the Hebrew language has changed over the centuries so, although most Israelis are Hebrew speakers, when they read the original Hebrew Bible, there is about 60 or 70% of what they read that they cannot understand.

What do we do? We can say either that we will leave the situation as it is because the Masoretic text very important text and we want to maintain the original Scriptures, or we can say the Word of God is so important that we want to provide a translation that the people can read and understand. It is interesting that a lot of people who have problems with a modern Hebrew translation, at the same time do not have an issue with translating the Word of God into English.

One of my life missions is to make sure my children and their children are able to read and understand the Word of God in Hebrew. I believe that there is no profit in them being able to read the Bible in the original language if they cannot understand it. I also believe in God's sovereignty and, just as I believe that God in his sovereignty allows very good translations in the English language and other languages to appear, I also believe that in his sovereignty He will not permit the modern Hebrew translation to miss anything needful for people to be saved and be able to live their lives to God's glory.

What is most important is that the main message of the Bible is communicated clearly. In fact one of the things we are hoping to do after we complete the modern Hebrew Bible, is to publish a Bible featuring the Masoretic text and our modern Hebrew text of the Old Testament in parallel columns.,