

# Israel according to the Gospels

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## Study Questions

1. Early in church history the Gospel of Matthew was placed first in the New Testament canon. How does it function as a “bridge” between the Old Testament and New Testament?
2. What do the words “particularism” and “universalism” indicate with reference to Matthew’s gospel? How do they help in understanding Matthew’s purposes for writing his gospel?
3. What are some contrasting positive and negative perspectives on Israel in Matthew’s gospel? What accounts for those contrasting views?
4. The author discusses three variant views of the relationship of Israel and the Church in Matthew’s gospel. What are those three views, and which of those do you presently adopt?
5. Why does Jesus call twelve disciples/apostles to advance his ministry to his people Israel? What is the significance of the number “twelve” for their relationship to Israel and to the Church?
6. Why did Jesus give the directive to the twelve apostles, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5-6). Would he say the same thing to you today? Why or why not?
7. What is Jesus’ purpose for speaking to the crowds in parables (see Matt. 13:10-17)? What does this reveal about Jesus’ developing relationship to the people of Israel?
8. In Jesus’ interaction with the Canaanite woman he exclaimed, “O woman, great is your faith!” (Matt. 15:28). What accounts for the greatness of her faith? How could you exhibit the same kind of greatness of faith?
9. In Matthew 21:43, Jesus gives one of the harshest statements to the leadership and the majority of the people of Israel: “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits” (21:43). What does that mean for Israel in the first century, and Israel and the Church today?
10. In that quote in Matthew 21:43, Jesus says that the kingdom of God will be given to a “people producing its fruits.” Who are those “people” and what are “its fruits”? How does that relate to you?
11. Matthew records that at the trial of Jesus, the crowds call for Barabbas to be released, and for Jesus to be crucified. Then the dramatic words are recorded, “and all the people answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’” (Matt. 27:25). Who are those “people,” and how does this affect our relationships with Jews today? How have those words wrongly been used to support anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism? How should

that be rectified?

12. How do Matthew 10:23; 19:28; 23:37-39; 24:14-16; and 28:19-20 hold out hope for the people of Israel in the future, and instructions for the Church today and in the future?