

Gaining Historical Perspective-Discussion Qs

1. What are some definitions of the term Israel?

- a) Jacob was renamed Israel (Gen. 32.28)
- b) The descendents of Abraham through Jacob/Israel (12 sons of Jacob grow to become the 12 tribes of Israel)
- c) The land (of Israel), the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve
- d) The Northern Kingdom (over against Judah, the Southern Kingdom) after the kingdom of Saul, David, and Solomon was divided

2. Why is the northern kingdom called Israel (are they the true Israel?)?

The designation seems to have its roots after the death of Saul when David became king (2 Sam 2.4). David's ascent to rule was in stages. He first became king over Judah; only the tribe of Judah acknowledged him as king. At the same time, Abner, a commander in Saul's army, made one of Saul's sons (Ish-bosheth) king over all Israel (except Judah, 2 Sam 2.8-11). Seven years later, the tribes to the north anointed David king over Israel (2 Sam 5.1-5).

It seems that the idea that the language of Israel in contrast to Judah began in the shift of kingship from Saul to David. It amounted to warfare between the house of Saul (that most of Israel followed) and the house of David (that Judah followed) [cf. 2 Sam 3.1f]. Judah was also the largest single tribe within Israel and had the largest territory.

When the kingdom is divided after Solomon's death, again, we have the house of David and Judah opposed to most of Israel. Thus, my simple answer is that Israel is used for the north because it is comprised of *most of the tribes of Israel*.

3. Where do the "looking back" texts of the NT end their accounting? What does this fact highlight in the movement from OT to NT in the history of redemption (cf. the "sudden" message of John and Jesus)?

The looking back ends with the united kingdom of David and Solomon.

The United Kingdom anticipates the coming of the kingdom in the greater David, who will not see corruption. The preaching of John and Jesus announces the coming of the kingdom (i.e. the kingdom promised in the OT has come).

Thus, there is something profoundly amiss in the history of Israel after the United Kingdom; the kingdom has not come; it not only has not come but the people are exiled; even the return anticipates a yet future restoration.

4. What does it mean for our interpretation of the OT to say that we must read with full recognition of the fact that we are Christians (that we must read the OT as Christians)?

It means that we need to have the whole story that culminates in Christ in view when we read the OT. We do not simply look to the OT for examples of loyalty, courage, etc.

This story is context for reading any part. We cannot leave this context out of mind.

It is like reading a detective novel with artful clues and hints regarding the culprit. Once you get to the end of the story and look back all the clues fall into place. From now on, you can never read the story in the same way again.

Perhaps we can speak of two equally true readings of the OT: the reading in the context of promise and the reading in the context of fulfillment. We are in fulfillment and must read from that perspective. Thus, we cannot preach a "father's day" message on a patriarch like Jacob.

5. Why do people oppose reading the OT as Christians?

- 1) To avoid the danger of allegorizing everything or too many things
- 2) To avoid missing the meaning of the text in its historical context
- 3) Over pressing discontinuity of OT and NT for various reasons such as the misuse of antithetic language in the NT regarding the law (such as, we are not under law but grace)
- 4) Viewing OT as in some way lower than NT canon, for some because the God of the OT is wrathful but loving in the NT