

Why Israel ?



***A Bible Study
on
The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption***

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PREFACE

The following notes are intended as a study on the calling and purpose of Israel in the ultimate salvation and restoration of man.

It will take you on a quick journey through the Bible, showing the consistent strategy, purpose and promises of our faithful God.

This study is written as notes and is not intended in any way to be a treatise or complete work on the subject of Israel and Biblical Prophecy. There are a number of excellent books and reference material available should you want to do further study.

We highly recommend that you work through the notes with your Bible open at the passages suggested in the notes. Please do not take our word for it, but read what the Bible has to say. Be good 'Bereans':

Acts 17 v 11:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

All quotations given in the notes are from the New King James version, unless otherwise indicated. We do encourage you to refer to other reputable translations in your studies.

Finally pray as you study. It is the Holy Spirit that leads us into all Truth. Ask Him to open your heart and mind to receive revelation and understanding in the Word of God. Also be ready to act upon what He reveals.

The Lord richly Bless you as you study

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INTRODUCTION

In the Creation the Lord's intention was to have a people for Himself that would be in relationship with Him in love. From the time of the fall His plan of redemption has been through the calling of a remnant to represent Him ... a kingdom of Priests. His heart is for those who seek after Him, to make a people special (holy) to Him.

There is a dividing line through history of two kinds of peoples:

- One of election (those who would look to Him).
- Those who reject and rebel.

Romans 9 v 15

For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

The Bible reveals some important aspects of God's character:

1. A God of Covenant
2. His Faithfulness
3. His Word stands and His calling is irrevocable
4. Holiness and Goodness
5. Mercy and Judgment
6. His eternal nature, in a world of time
7. His Omnipotence
8. A God who is passionate

In the Scriptures we read about how God has chosen a man, then a nation who:

- Will be source of blessing to all the nations
- Will bring the Seed of the Woman (Jesus) who will crush Satan's power and bring salvation for all
- Will be an example both of God's severity and His mercy.
- Will demonstrate the Faithfulness of God
- Will be bring the teaching and understanding of the One true God
- Will be an instrument of God's judgment on the nations who reject Him

Jesus declared to a Samaritan woman that 'Salvation is of (or comes from) the Jews'. As it was, with the coming of the Messiah, and so it will be upon His return.

It is not possible in a study of this length to cover all the scriptures relating to the theme of Israel. It is actually quite amazing as to how much the Bible deals with God's continual love for Israel as an 'unfaithful wife', and how He brings her back to Himself.

Israel is set as an example to all nations, that we might learn and understand His dealings with us, and His plan and passion for our redemption in spite of ourselves. God never goes back on His Word! In fact His Covenant character is very important to understand in the context of His dealing with His people Israel, and ultimately with us.

1COR 10 v 11-12

11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

God always means exactly what He says, and the Bible is best understood as it stands, especially with regard to Israel. The Bible talks about real people, real places, past and present and future. All prophecies that have been fulfilled so far have been fulfilled literally, so there is no reason to believe that those awaiting fulfilment should be any different.

As we have been blessed and come into the 'Commonwealth of Israel' through Messiah, so we too should have God's heart and passion for His people and His place:

Psalms 122:6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you"

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THE BEGINNING

THE FALL

Gen 3: 1 – 13

God's Response

Gen. 3 14 - 24

- Curse of death and the ground
- The seed of the woman (Jesus) will crush the head of Satan
- God provides the first covering for sin through sacrifice
- Adam and Eve banished from the Garden and Tree of Life so that sin should not be eternal (*Watch out for the re-appearance of the Tree of Life in the book of Revelation!*)

CAIN, ABEL AND SETH

Genesis 4.

Abel was righteous through sacrifice, Cain was unrighteous in offering the work of his hands.

We have here the first murder and spilling of human blood.

Note the difference between the Blood of Abel and the Blood of Christ: Hebrews 12 v 22 – 25

Seth replaces Abel as the line of those who call upon 'The name of the Lord'

NOAH

Genesis 6 - 10

The Righteous line goes through Enoch (means God took him), Methuselah and Lamech to Noah.

First Global Judgement (The Flood):

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Gen 6,7 & 8 | Only Noah and his family saved because he 'walked with God' |
| Gen 8 v 20 - 9: v 17 | The Noahic Covenant :
No global flood;
Meat eating
Life for a Life
Fear of man |
| Gen 9 v 18- 29 | The sin of Canaan and the Noahic Prophecy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shem (Semitic peoples) receive blessing• Japheth (European) to grow and be blessed through Shem, and be in their tents (Think about the salvation in Jesus and the Church era)• Canaan cursing and subjugation (By Shem and Japheth)• Ham not mentioned |

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Rebellion against the command to populate the earth and distrust of God's promise:

Gen 11: 1 – 8 The tower of Babel was a waterproof fortress (led by Nimrod see Gen 10v10)

Gen 11 v 9 The scattering of the nations and start of different languages (see Acts 17 v 24-31)

Gen 11 10 –32 The line of Shem (means 'name') is chosen, leading to Abram

'Mystery Babylon' is to become a theme running through history to re-appear at various times and especially in the last days as we read in Revelation. It becomes symbolic of all those who seek to rebel against God and be independent of Him.

It is worthwhile at this point to note the words of Jesus with regard to the parable of the Wheat and Tares:

Matthew 13 v 37-43

"Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 He [Jesus] answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.

39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

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ABRAHAM

Gen 11v26 – Gen 25 v 10

The calling of Abraham represents a key point in the history of redemption. God now appoints a man among the 'new' generations on the earth. Though he and Sarai his wife were barren, from him would come a nation, and the Seed through whom all nations of the earth would be blessed.

THE CALL AND THE PROMISE

Gen. 12: 1 – 5 , particularly v. 2&3:

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered (Gen 13 v 16)

*Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be "
*And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Gen 15 v 5-6)**

The Promised Land

Gen 12 v 4 – 7; Gen 13 v 12 – 15; Gen 15

The land of Canaan was given to Abraham and his descendants **for perpetuity**.

This was confirmed by a property covenant in (Gen 15 v 7-21).

The boundaries of the land given to Abraham were affirmed to the children of Israel in Exodus 23 v 31.

The promises to Abraham were **unconditional**.

Melchizedek

Gen 14 v 17 – 24; Hebrews 5 - 7

*Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."
And he gave him a tithe of all. Gen 14 v 18 -20*

There a small section, but significant passage in the biblical account of Abraham, when Abraham meets a somewhat mysterious King/Priest called Melchizedek, which means King of Righteousness. He was also king of Salem (Shalom) which is King of Peace. Much has been conjectured about this as to whether Melchizedek was a person ruling at that time or in fact a supernatural appearance of Jesus. Whichever it was the Messianic meaning and importance of this is clear:

*The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."
The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!
Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.
The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."
The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.
He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. Psalm 110 v 1 - 6*

*So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."
As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek";
who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,
though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.
And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,
called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," Hebrews 5 v 5 -10*

*For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.
And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest
who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.
For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." Hebrews 7 v 14-17*

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ISHMAEL AND ISAAC.

Genesis 16, 17,21,22

Ishmael was a product of Abraham trying to fulfil God's promise by his own strength, whereas it was to be a supernatural act.

The line of the promise (and the Seed) was to be through Isaac, who was the son God originally promised, though it was to be several years after the promise.

God re-affirmed His covenant in Genesis 17, renaming Abram to Abraham (father of a multitude). Circumcision was introduced as part of this covenant. Abraham wanted to favour Ishmael (now 13 years old), but God said that His covenant was to be with Isaac and **his** descendants.

Nevertheless God recognised his promise to Abraham as a father of nations, and proclaimed Ishmael would also bring forth a nation (Gen 16v 10 – 12; Gen 21 v 8-13). Ishmael is the ancestor of some of the modern Arab states.

But note the declaration concerning Ishmael:

He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." (Gen 16 v 17)

The birth of Ishmael, but the calling of Isaac was to bring an enmity of half-brothers to this day.

OTHER NATIONS

GENESIS 25 v 1 - 8

Abraham was to have other children through Keturah, including the Midianites, who were to provide refuge for Moses, but later become bitter enemies of Israel.

JACOB AND ESAU

Genesis 25 v 19-34; Ch 27-28

Isaac was to father twins (though certainly not identical!) through Rebekah. The elder was Esau who would be expected to inherit the blessing (and the Promise).

However Esau although dad's favourite, was certainly not God's, and the birthright passed to Jacob.

Though known as a schemer, he still had the quality that Esau did not seem to possess ... to seek after God.

Gen 25: 21 – 34 Prophecy and beginning of its fulfilment as birthright changes hands.
Gen 27: 27 –29 Isaac's prophetic blessing
Gen 28: 10 – 15 God confirms the promise.

Esau is the ancestor of the Edomites.

ISRAEL

Genesis 32 v 24 – 32.

Jacob is renamed Israel after his encounter with an Angel. The name means ' struggles with God' or 'prince with God' or 'God Prevails', which is very significant. It would be a forerunner also of the ongoing conflict of a people wrestling with their God

Gen 35 v 9 – 15 God's Covenant was re-affirmed to Jacob as Israel.

INTO EGYPT.

Genesis 47 v 1 – 11; Exodus 1

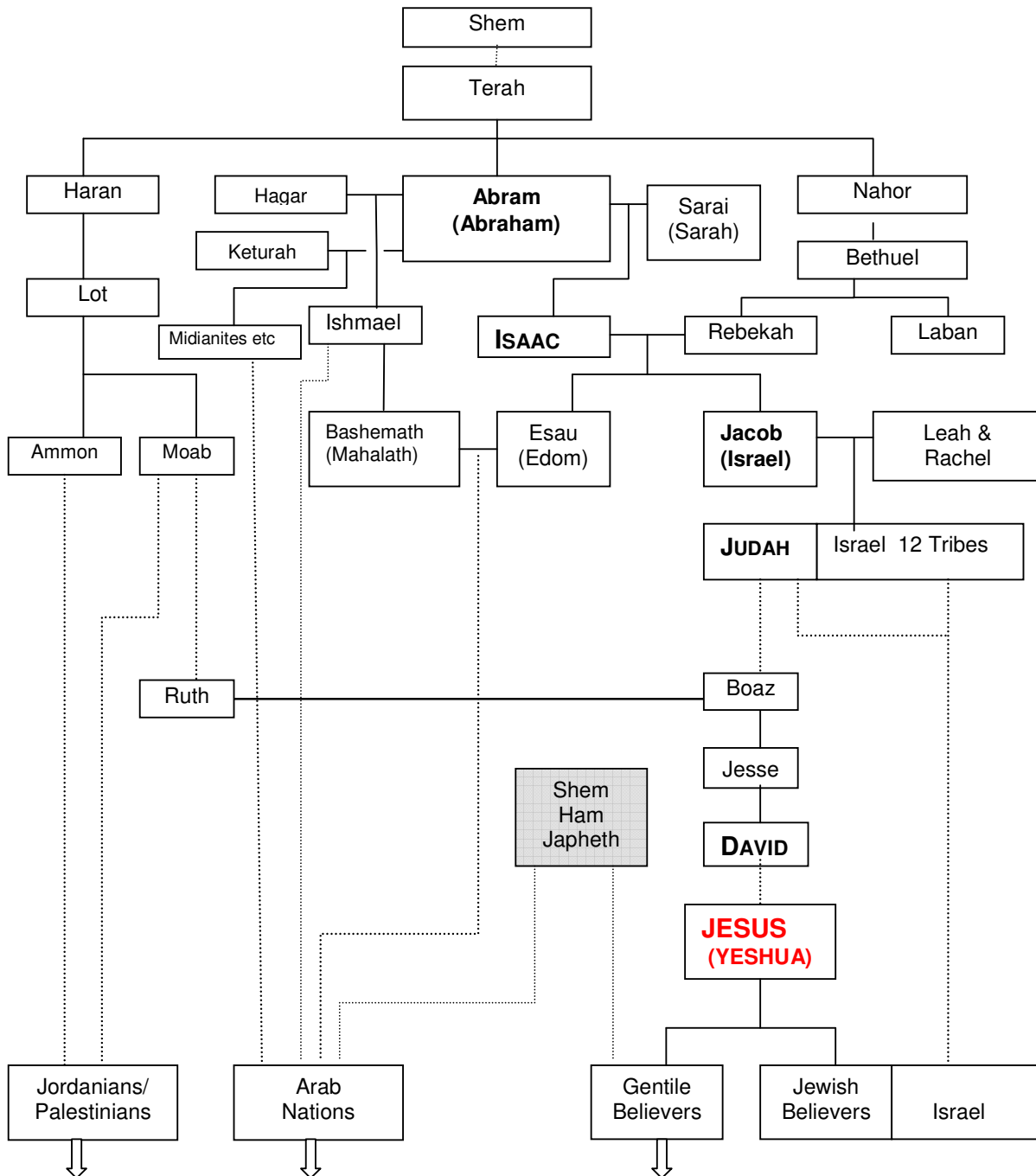
As prophesied to Abraham (Genesis 15 v 12-16), the children of Israel (now the twelve tribes in embryo) end up in Egypt, initially prospering under Joseph, having been saved from severe famine.

Jacob's prophetic blessing on his sons (Genesis 49), selects Judah as the 'royal' tribe until 'Shiloh' comes.

They now await a deliverer and the birth of a nation.

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ABRAHAM'S FAMILY TREE : A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS



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.** For He Himself is our peace, **who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,** having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so **as to create in Himself one new man from the two,** thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Now, therefore, **you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2 v 11-22

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A NATION IS BORN

FROM SLAVERY TO A NATION

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

According to God's promise to Abraham, and expected by Joseph, He was to bring them deliverance by a mighty hand, under the leadership of Moses.

Israel became a nation when they departed from Egypt. They were to be a nation under God who gave His covenant to them through the Ten Commandments.

The twelve tribes were to return to the land of Canaan and take possession of the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but the blessing and ability to prosper and stay in the land was conditional on keeping the commandments.

A new phase of history was to begin, which would lead to a cycle of

- Possession/Re-possession
- Blessing and cursing
- Sovereignty and Vassal statehood

So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying:

"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; "for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?"

"Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. "For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." Deut 31 v 24 - 29

However at no time did the 'title deeds' pass to any other nation, and God was always mindful of His covenant towards Israel, and the fulfilment of all the promises which are yet to come.

Exodus Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy is the account of their mighty deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the Law and their wanderings in the wilderness. It show God's discipline for their disobedience, but also His mercy and provision.

Exodus 3 : 5 – 15	God identifies Himself to Moses, promises deliverance and, the Promised Land.
Exodus 6 : 1 – 8	God confirms the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
Exodus 23 v 18-31	The Lord's promise to drive out the inhabitants and fix the boundaries of the land
Deut. 5: 1- 22	The Ten Commandments
Lev. 25:23	God owns the land !
Deut 29	The renewal of the covenant
Deut. 30	The Lord declares that they will be sent to exile, but will gather and bring them back
	The Blessing of obedience and loving the Lord, but the punishment of sin
Deut 32	Song of Moses declares how they will forsake Him, and He will punish them. Yet He will have compassion and restore them.

TAKING POSSESSION

Joshua, Judges, Ruth

Possession of the land (though not completely) was to be under Joshua after Moses' death.

After Joshua and the first generation of settlers dies, a cycle of obedience and disobedience began with God raising up Judges to turn His people back to him and bring deliverance from their enemies.

God would always honour His covenant when Israel returned to him , however haltingly.

The account of Ruth is significant, not only because she became the ancestral mother of David (and Jesus), but also because it is symbolic of non-Jews (she was a Moabite) coming under the shelter of a redeemer (Boaz, but pointing to Jesus). It also speaks of Ruth-like Gentiles who would stand with Israel, even when like Naomi, they are dried up and in despair. Ruth is the one who said:

"Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.

Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." Ruth 1 v 16-17

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RISE AND FALL OF ISRAEL

THE KINGDOM STATE

1&2 Samuel; 1&2 Kings; 1&2 Chronicles

Israel moved from Judges in the land to having Kings, the last and greatest prophet/judge Samuel presiding over the transfer. It is clear from 1 Samuel 8 v 5 –22 that this was the people's rather than God's choice.

The kingdom of Israel reached its peak under David and Solomon, only eventually to split, into two kingdoms (Israel and Judah) and then move into cycles of obedience and disobedience bringing blessing and curses.

It was also the time of prophets, such as Elijah who would be the spiritual guardians over Israel and call the nation back to God.

Other prophets like Isaiah warned of God's judgement to come if they continued in disobedience, but also looked to the day of Messiah and the day when the Promise would be fully fulfilled.

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT.

"Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.

"And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.

"Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously,

"since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.

"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

"He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

"I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.

"But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

"And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.""
2 Samuel 7 : 8 – 16

God promised David (a man after God's heart) that the Promised line leading to Messiah would be through him. In establishing the throne forever, God was looking to the Messiah.

The Promised generational line had been declared to be through Judah after the blessing of Jacob, but now it was through a specific family in Judah, Jesse who came from Bethlehem.

SOLOMON

The reign of Solomon represents the height of the kingdom of Israel, but also its downfall::

For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded.

Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. "Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. "However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen." 1 Kings 11 v 4-13

Although God's judgment would come upon Israel and lead to its exile, God had not forgotten His promise to David, and to Jerusalem the city He had chosen. God will never forsake His Word, and the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. However God can and does change the time and manner of their fulfilment according to the obedience of His people. In the end God will have His day, and all His promises will be fulfilled and not return to Him empty (Isaiah 40 and Isaiah 55)

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JERUSALEM

2 Samuel 4 v 5 –10; 1Chronicles 28, 29; Psalm 122

David established Jerusalem as the capital, and made the way for Solomon to build the Temple for the worship and presence of God.

It was Solomon who declared at the dedication of the Temple:

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2Ch 7:14)

The Temple was built on Mount Moriah – the exact place where Abraham had offered Isaac, but the Lord had provided the ram! It was also where David brought the threshing floor of Oran to build an altar at the Lord's command and to offer sacrifice in order to spare the land. (2 Samuel 24 and 2 Chronicles 3v1).

Later through the prophets the Lord affirms Jerusalem and the Temple as being His special place. For example:

Mic 4:2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Zech 2 v 10-12

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD. "Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. "And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

Isa 62 v 1

For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns.

It is clearly the Lord's land and His chosen city, and never intended for division or possession by other nations or religions. Yet Jerusalem is the place from where He will bless all the nations that go to seek Him there.

THE DOWNWARD TREND

Isaiah; Amos

Ultimately after several generations, the downward cycle of Israel's history led to the promised judgement of God. First the 10 Northern tribes were expelled and dispersed throughout Syria. Sometime later Judah and Benjamin, the southern tribes were sent into exile to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. The first temple was destroyed and Jerusalem and the land left desolate. This was as prophesied by Jeremiah, that the land would have its 70 years of Sabbath rest to make up for the Sabbath years that it should have enjoyed under the covenant.

Amos, a prophet in Israel saw the coming judgment upon the Northern Kingdom, but also their ultimate return.

Amos 9: 1-10 God's anger with a disobedient people

Amos 9: 11-15 :

"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the LORD who does this thing.

"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.

I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.

I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," Says the LORD your God.

In Isaiah 40 v 1 we read:

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins."

Psalms also contains many references to the restoration and the coming Kingdom.

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FIRST EXILE

WARNING AND JUDGMENT

Jeremiah; Ezekiel

The prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel not only prophesied of the impending judgment and expulsion from the land, but also of their return and ultimately of the future kingdom under Messiah.

The message is quite clear that the Lord will have his day when all His promises will be fulfilled, and His name justified. It will be a literal and complete fulfilment to a specific people and place. He will also judge the nations that have opposed Israel or delighted in their judgment. For example:

Ezekiel 36 v 1 - 10

"And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD!

'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because the enemy has said of you, 'Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession,"'

"Therefore prophesy, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because they made you desolate and swallowed you up on every side, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you are taken up by the lips of talkers and slandered by the people" —

'Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, the valleys, the desolate wastes, and the cities that have been forsaken, which became plunder and mockery to the rest of the nations all around—

'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with whole-hearted joy and spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country."

"Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, and the valleys, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and My fury, because you have borne the shame of the nations."

'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I have raised My hand in an oath that surely the nations that are around you shall bear their own shame.

"But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come.

"For indeed I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown.

"I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt.

This is a warning as clear today as it was then.

HOPE AND PROVIDENCE

DANIEL; ESTHER

The Lord also spoke through both Jeremiah and Ezekiel about a day of a new covenant when His law would be written in our hearts, and all would know the Lord:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—

"not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

"No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer 31 v 31-34)

So despite God's anger and judgement expressed by the prophets at this time He also affirmed His perpetual covenant concerning Israel and the land. God gave hope through the prophets of the restoration of Israel, of Jerusalem and the Temple. Though they had been dispossessed, the land and the calling had never been revoked. Our God is a God of Covenant and His Word never fails.

A well known prophecy is The Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel 37. Much has been written to encourage what God can do in bringing life back, but the Lord says that these bones are 'The whole house of Israel'.

Prophets like Daniel, who like Joseph, prospered in the land of his captivity, were also given revelation regarding the coming world powers, and ultimately the end of days, culminating in the Kingdom of God. Daniel also gives us a key of intercession and how the Lord works through those who serve Him.

The Jews were told to settle in the land of their captivity and seek the peace of the place they were. The account of Esther also shows that the Lord's hidden hand of Providence was still with His people.

Why Israel ?

The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

FIRST RETURN

RETURN AND REBUILDING A NATION

**Ezra; Nehemiah; Obadiah; Zechariah;
Haggai; Malachi**

After the 70-year captivity prophesied by Jeremiah, groups of Jews began to return to Israel in phases. However the return was still under the favours of Persia and Assyria and Israel remained a vassal if somewhat more independent state.

In Ezra we have the temple being restored along with the law, and in Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, as well as government. It was also a time to re-purify a people that had been in danger of being assimilated. This was done with much opposition from groups such as the Samaritans.

The prophets at this time encouraged the people to rebuild and return to the roots of their faith in God, but once again pointed to a Messianic age when all things would be fully restored and the promises of God fulfilled:

"Thus says the LORD: 'I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.'

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, Each one with his staff in his hand Because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.'

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'If it is marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, Will it also be marvellous in My eyes?' Says the LORD of hosts.

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.' Zechariah 8 v 3-9

The prophecies also give warning to nations who try to destroy Israel or divide up its land.

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. Zechariah 12:2,3

I will also gather all nations, And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; And I will enter into judgment with them there On account of My people, My heritage Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; They have also divided up My land. Joel 3 v 2

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. Zechariah 12:9

"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts.

'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts." Haggai 2 v 6-9

BY MY SPIRIT

The Lord declares how He would now work concerning Israel. Not necessarily by mighty external acts as in the Exodus, but by the enduring, persevering and often hidden ways of His Spirit.

Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. "Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left."

So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?"

*Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: '**Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.***

'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" Zechariah 4 v 1 - 7

Why Israel ? *The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption*

THE 'QUIET PERIOD'

MACABEES, HASMONEANS.

The last prophetic writing before the New Testament period is Malachi, which was some 450 years before Jesus first coming.

Historically it was far from a quiet period for Israel. It was the time of the Seleucids and Antiochus Epiphanes IV (often thought to be a forerunner of the AntiChrist) who tried to assimilate the Jews and stop them offering sacrifices and keeping Sabbath. A period of independence was gained after the successful revolt of the Maccabees, who against all odds defeated the Greek army.

Daniel had prophesied that at this time:

Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. (Daniel 11v32)

It was also a time of setting up the various Jewish Councils and Traditions law, including the rising of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes.

As some of the prophecies of Daniel were being played out this time saw the rise and fall of the Macedonian empire, and the rise of the Roman Empire. Israel eventually came under the influence of Roman rule by a despotic vassal King, Herod the Great who built the second temple

But God's Covenant always stands sure:

Thus says the LORD: "If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the LORD. Jer 31:37

Whilst we are in this period of history building up to the coming of Jesus, it is worth looking at the prophecies given in Daniel:

"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendour was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

"This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

"its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

"You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

"This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

"You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

"and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold.

"But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

"And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

"Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

"And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

"As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

"Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." Daniel 2 v 31 - 44

THE COMING KINGDOMS

Daniel 7/8

Daniel is given visions in dreams of the coming kingdoms, and their nature. This spoke of the of the immediate kingdoms to come, and then moved forward to a kingdom of the last days. The final kingdom is received from the Ancient of Days by a 'Son of Man' coming with the clouds of heaven. This is an everlasting kingdom over all peoples, nations and languages. The promise is that despite all the rising earthly kingdoms and their might, the saints of the Highest One will receive with Him the everlasting kingdom.

Why Israel ?
The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

THE FIRST COMING OF JESUS

Jesus came as the 'first Messiah' to suffer and die as a ransom not just for Israel, but for the whole world.

The family trees outlined in the gospels are actually very important because they show the pedigree of the Messiah as fulfilling God's promises.

His coming, ministry and manner of death was declared beforehand in the Old Testament writings, including the books of the Prophets and the Psalms. Some examples are:

His birth	Isaiah 7v14/Matt 1v18-23; Matt 2v 6/Micah 5v2
His ministry	Isaiah 61/Luke 7 v22/Matt 4 v 12-17/Isaiah 9 v 1 -7; Isaiah 11 v 1 -5
His death	Zechariah 11v12/Matt 27v2-10; Isaiah 53; Psalm 22
His Resurrection	Acts 2 v 22-36/Psalm 16v8-11/Psalm110v1

These prophecies were fulfilled precisely, with some also pointing to a final fulfilment on His Return. This is in full accord with Biblical Prophecy.

He came first to His own people, and He has declared that He will also return to them. We know now that in effect God allowed their rejection of Messiah to bring salvation to all ! It is part of the mystery of the Church and the Lord's ultimate plan of redemption.

Jesus himself prophesied concerning Israel, confirming and expanding previous prophecies such as Daniel. We see much of this in Matthew chapters 23 to 25 and Luke 21.

Jesus specifically speaks of:

The desolation of Jerusalem and judgment on the Jews	Matt 23 v 29-39; Luke 21 v 20 - 24
The destruction of The Temple	Matt 24 v 1-2; Luke 31 v 6
The rising tide of wars, disaster, famines and plagues	Matt 24 v 6-8; Luke 21 v 9 -11
False messiahs and prophets	Matt 24 v 4-5,11,23-26; Luke 21 v 8
The manner of His Second coming	Matt 24 v 27-31; Luke 21 v 27 - 28
The ripening fig tree (The State of Israel ?)	Matt 24 v 32; Luke 13 v 6 - 8
Those left those taken	Matt 24 v 37- 42
Making sure you are ready	Matt 25 v 1 -13; Luke 31 v 34 - 36
Warning against lazy, unbelieving servants	Matt 25 v 14 - 30
Sheep and Goat nations (how they treated His people)	Matt 25 v 31 - 46

He has promised to return a second time in Glory to receive His Messianic Kingdom.

Jesus also says that the Jews will see him no more until they are ready to welcome Him (Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.) The day will come when His own people will call upon Him:

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

"In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. Zechariah 12 v 10 - 11

In the meantime Israel has suffered for its rejection of Messiah, whilst Gentiles 'dwell in the tents of Shem'. They had cried that His Blood was upon them, as it has been. Yet the Blood of Jesus speaks of better things than that of Abel !

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Romans 4:16

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. Galatians 3 v 13-16

Why Israel ?

The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

THE CHURCH ARISES

The early church at first was entirely Jewish, and took quite a lot to persuade them about the opening up to the Gentiles, which first happened through Peter and Cornelius.

Paul was to take the main missions to the Gentiles, and there is much in the New Testament writings handling the whole question of whether Gentile believers needed to be first converted to Judaism. It was very much the subject of the first main Council in Jerusalem, which is estimated to be about 20 years after the church started.

Romans 9 v 25 -26

As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."

Over a period of time, and especially with the dispersion of the Jews, the Church grew increasingly Gentile not only in its numbers, but also in its thinking. By AD 400, with the acceptance of Christianity by Constantine (325 AD) and the rise of the Byzantines, the Church had effectively distanced themselves from the Jewish aspect of the church even enforcing Gentile traditions and forbidding Jewish festivals, including Sabbath, which evidence suggests groups of believers were still keeping.

The church had by this time become generally Anti-Semitic.

DID THE CHURCH REPLACE ISRAEL ?

Romans 9 to 11

Romans 11 v 1 'I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not!'

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter day

Hosea 3 v 4-5

We read in Romans 11, that non-Jews have been grafted into the Olive Tree and the Church is very much warned not to 'boast against the root' Paul likens the return of the Jews to Messiah as 'life from the dead'

However the mystery of the Church has been revealed, in that in Jesus there is One New Man bringing together all nationalities into His sheepfold, and the Commonwealth of Israel. Those that were far away from the Promise have now been brought near by the Blood of Christ (Ephesians 2 v 11-22).

The essential message is that through Yeshua (Jesus) all believers are brought into the one Assembly (Ecclesia) which is the Church, which includes **both** Jew and Gentile. This has been accomplished through the grafting in of Gentile believers through Jesus into the Olive Tree of God's calling in Israel.

We must remember that the Church belongs to Jesus not Christians ! Epistles such as Romans 11 point clearly to the Hebrew heritage and faith.

TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

Luke 21 v 24

And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Jesus referred to the 'Times of the Gentiles' when Jerusalem would be taken over (trampled down) by the Gentiles. This happened with the Destruction of the Temple in AD70 and subsequently with the dispersion of the Jews after the Bar Kochba revolt in AD 132. Emperor Hadrian exiled the Jews and named the land 'Philistia' (Palestine) as a deep insult to the Jews. He also levelled Jerusalem and on top of the rubble rebuilt a pagan city, which he named Aelia Capitolina.

Up until 1948, there was a succession of rulers in Jerusalem and indeed this city has been destroyed and rebuilt about 20 times. But this time would come to an end. Although we are not quite sure when exactly this is, the fact of Israel being back in the land must be an indication. The Fig tree (Israel) though cursed can begin to ripen again !

But You, O LORD, shall endure forever, And the remembrance of Your name to all generations.

You will arise and have mercy on Zion; For the time to favour her, Yes, the set time, has come.

For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, And show favour to her dust.

So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, And all the kings of the earth Your glory.

For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory.

He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, And shall not despise their prayer.

This will be written for the generation to come, That a people yet to be created may praise the LORD. Psalm 102

Why Israel ?
The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

QUICK HISTORY FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE, TO THE PRESENT TIME

Date (AD/CE)	
66	Jewish Revolt
70	Destruction of the second Temple, as prophesied by Jesus
73	Fall of Masada
95	Book of Revelation written by John at Patmos
132 -135	Bar Kochba Jewish Revolt , leading to destruction of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jews, who are completely banned from Jerusalem.
135 - 638	Roman and Byzantine period. Ascendancy of state Christianity. Christianity becomes state religion of Romans under Constantine in 324 AD. This leads to further disassociation from the Jews, including the change of festivals, such as Christmas. Jerusalem becomes a major centre for Christianity, but Jews are discouraged. However a remnant remains in the land. For a short period the land comes under Persian rule, with many massacres and destruction of churches.
638 – 1099	Arab Muslims take over Israel and Jerusalem. Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa mosques build on the site of the original temple. Jews were permitted again to live in the city and soon began to thrive.
1099 - 1187	Crusaders took Jerusalem and promptly massacred Jews and Muslims. Return to Christian. Jews and Muslims replaced by European and Eastern Christians.
1187 - 1250	Jerusalem taken by Saladin, and the city restored. Jews return to the city and there was also immigration of Jews from France and Yemen
1250 - 1517	Marmelukes take over the country and city and rebuild several parts
1517 - 1917	Ottoman Turks take over Jerusalem and most of the Near East. Jerusalem initially flourished under Suleiman, but afterwards went into decline. However Jewish community in Israel began to increase. There was a particular influx of Jews who had been expelled from Spain
1917	British take Jerusalem from the Turks Jewish and Arab neighbourhoods began to expand, with rising tension between the two groups. Balfour declaration for a homeland for the Jews
1948	UN declares Israel partition. Ben Gurion declares Eretz Israel Arabs move immediately to destroy Israel, and take Jerusalem
1967	7-day war. Israel gain control of Jerusalem
1973	Yom Kippur War. Israel gain control of Golan

From the emergence of Israel we have seen a land re-populated and begin to blossom, even despite the predicted opposition of the Arab and other nations.

Romans 11 v 11 – 12 & 26 -36

I say then, have they [Israel] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

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."

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.

For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counsellor?" "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Why Israel ?
The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

THE SECOND RETURN FROM EXILE

Isaiah 11 v 11-12

*It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.
He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.*

Since the re-birth of Israel Aliyah (immigration) has continued with some quite remarkable and miraculous stories. Many believe some of the ancient prophecies are being fulfilled by some of these events. The Lord is keeping His word that He would bring them from the ends of the earth

The question is are we in the time of the second return ?

- Israel is back in the land (though as dry bones not yet returned to the Lord – Ezekiel 37
- The fig tree (The State of Israel) is ripening, and the nations seemed to be gathering against them. (Luke 21 v 29 – 33)
- Their old enemies, such as Ishmael, Edom, Moab and Ammon are around all seek their expulsion and destruction.
- Despite all the odds and seven wars Israel is still there

ZECH 2 v 10 - 12

- 10 *"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD.*
11 *"Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.*
12 *"And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.*

Zech 10 v 6 - 12

- "I will strengthen the house of Judah, And I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back, Because I have mercy on them. They shall be as though I had not cast them aside; For I am the LORD their God, And I will hear them.*
- 7 *Those of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, And their heart shall rejoice as if with wine. Yes, their children shall see it and be glad; Their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.*
8 *I will whistle for them and gather them, For I will redeem them; And they shall increase as they once increased.*
9 *"I will sow them among the peoples, And they shall remember Me in far countries; They shall live, together with their children, And they shall return.*
10 *I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt, And gather them from Assyria. I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, Until no more room is found for them.*
11 *He shall pass through the sea with affliction, And strike the waves of the sea: All the depths of the River shall dry up. Then the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, And the sceptre of Egypt shall depart.*
12 *"So I will strengthen them in the LORD, And they shall walk up and down in His name," Says the LORD.*

Isaiah 49 v 13- 23

- 13 *Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, And will have mercy on His afflicted.*
14 *But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me."*
15 *"Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.*
16 *See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.*
17 *Your sons shall make haste; Your destroyers and those who laid you waste Shall go away from you.*
18 *Lift up your eyes, look around and see; All these gather together and come to you. As I live," says the LORD, "You shall surely clothe yourselves with them all as an ornament, And bind them on you as a bride does.*
19 *"For your waste and desolate places, And the land of your destruction, Will even now be too small for the inhabitants; And those who swallowed you up will be far away.*
20 *The children you will have, After you have lost the others, Will say again in your ears, 'The place is too small for me; Give me a place where I may dwell.'*
21 *Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me, Since I have lost my children and am desolate, A captive, and wandering to and fro? And who has brought these up? There I was, left alone; But these, where were they?'"*
22 *Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, And set up My standard for the peoples; They shall bring your sons in their arms, And your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders;*
23 *Kings shall be your foster fathers, And their queens your nursing mothers; They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, And lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD, For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me."*

Why Israel ?
The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS

THE TRIBULATION

Matt 24 v 21-22

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

Rev 7 v 13-14

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Deut 4 v 30

"When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice

Interpretations of the Great Tribulation are many and varied and some indeed very strange. This is a study for another time . However what we should note is that Israel and Jerusalem are back centre-stage physically, geographically and spiritually in the final drama of history. For example:

- The rebuilt Temple and the AntiChrist
- The 144,000 evangelists of the tribes of Israel,
- Moses and Elijah return to Jerusalem, as the Two Witnesses
- The final events take place as the enemies surround Jerusalem.

One of the key event during the Tribulation is the battle of Armageddon, when the Lord judges the nations and brings down Babylon (the mystery of iniquity that has re-appeared).

Revelation 16 v 12 – 21.

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

The Book of Revelation becomes a lot easier to understand when taken in the context of what will be happening in Israel and with His people. The Church Age has now given way to the latter days, and the prophecies including Isaiah, Zechariah and Daniel, as well as Jesus' own word begin to come into effect.

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 v 25 -27

Why Israel ?

The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

THE SECOND COMING

Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives. His entry will probably take the same route as His first triumphal entry ! He is coming to rule from Jerusalem and not anywhere else .

Matt 24 v 29 - 31

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Zec 14:4

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east.

And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.

THE MILLENNIAL PERIOD

Revelation 20 v 1 - 6

According to Revelation we have a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth. It is during this period that many of the Old Testament prophecies concerning a Golden Age for Israel begin to make sense and come to their fulfilment.

We do read *that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3v8)*. The Lord will have His Day that He has declared.

It is the time of the Messianic Age as prophesied. The Lord will reign from Jerusalem and all the nations shall be blessed in Him. The promise given to Abraham reaches its climax.

ISA 2 v 1 -4

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it.

Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people;

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore

Zechariah 14 v 16 - 17

And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.

Isa 60 v 1 – 3

Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.

For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Isa 11 v 6 - 10

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

Why Israel ?
The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

THE FINAL REVOLT AND JUDGMENT

Rev 20 v 7 – 15

After perfect conditions for 1000 years there is a final revolt and the Gog Magog rebellion takes place. They encamp round about Jerusalem, and fire from heaven devours them

This ushers in the final phase of history.

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.

They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

Also there was no more sea.

THE NEW JERUSALEM

Revelation 21 - 22

REV 21 v 2 – 7 AND v 22 -27

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

..... I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The New Jerusalem is part of the final outworking of the God's redemptive plan.

All nations have been brought together, and testimony is given both to the twelve tribes and twelve apostles as the gates and foundations are named after them.

There is no temple or light because the Lord himself is there

The Tree of Life re-appears, its fruit for the healing of the nations, and the Water of Life flows from the Throne of God:

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

Revelation 21 v 1-3

All things are completed.

Why Israel ?
The Prophetic Purpose of Israel in Redemption

CONCLUSION

From the very beginning the Lord has wanted a people for Himself, and He has clearly mapped out a way of redemption for man from the time of the fall and selected a people through whom He will bring blessing to all nations.

Satan, who was a rebel from the beginning, has stirred up those after the spirit of Cain who would reject and defy God's ways and stand in rebellion. This is little wonder since Satan stands against the purpose of God and will seek to stop it coming to fruition, especially as it involves his own irrevocable demise. Although we know that this is ultimately futile he will do all he can to oppose God and His people – Jew or Gentile believer.

This is a true explanation of why there has been such endemic Anti-Semitism worldwide, and through so many generations. It is fundamentally spiritual:

Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing?

The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us."

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.

Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure:

"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."

"I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."

Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

Psalm 2

But Israel was unfaithful to God and their calling, and we see in Scriptures the 'kindness and severity' of God in His dealing with His people. It is in fact an object-lesson to all nations, if they will hear. But however rocky the road may have been the final outcome is clear:

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.

"And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.

"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. "Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 36 v 22 – 28

The Bible clearly shows that God has still a purpose in Israel through which He will sanctify His great name and vindicate His covenant and calling before the nations

Jesus declared that 'Salvation is of the Jews', and God has kept Israel as His people and a special witness in the earth, both of His severity and mercy. The mystery of the Church is that this salvation is brought to all people and nations through the Jesus as the Seed of Abraham, and so truly all the nations of the earth have been blessed through him, as prophesied.

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

*And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, **And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,** And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*

Rev 5 v 5 -10

God's purpose is fulfilled as always declared as He establishes a people for Himself from all nations, to reign with Him in eternity and love him from their heart. He is the Almighty God, not only of the Jews but to all.