

All about **Israel**

by Pastor Bruce R. Edwards



- ▶ THE LAND
- ▶ THE PEOPLE
- ▶ THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL
- ▶ PALESTINE
- ▶ CITY OF JERUSALEM
- ▶ END TIME PROPHECY
- ▶ WHY STAND WITH ISRAEL

THE HOLY LAND



ALL ABOUT ISRAEL

**The People - The Land - Jerusalem
and Israel in Prophecy**

Bruce R. Edwards

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“I will make you into a great nation (Israel), 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.”

Genesis 12:2

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Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2024

ISBN: 979-8-24217-484-9

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INTRODUCTION

Israel is one of the smallest nations on earth, yet it occupies a place in world affairs – and in the purposes of God – that is far larger than its geography would suggest. Today, modern Israel encompasses roughly 8,000 square miles, making it smaller than the state of New Hampshire. Yet the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob covers approximately 68,000 square miles. Scripture is clear: one day Israel will occupy all that God has sworn to give them. Until then, this small strip of land continues to dominate global headlines, provoke international debate, and stir intense emotions among nations, leaders, and religions alike.

Surrounded by hostile neighbors and under constant threat of attack, Israel lives in a state of perpetual tension. It is criticized, opposed, and often vilified by much of the world. Yet despite its size, Israel's survival defies human explanation. That alone should cause thoughtful readers of Scripture to pause and ask an important question: Why does Israel matter so much – to history, to current events, and most importantly, to God?

The purpose of this book is to help answer that question.

I wrote *All About Israel* to help readers gain a clear, biblical understanding of Israel's unique role in God's redemptive plan. Much confusion exists today – among Christians included – about how we should understand Israel, how we should respond to the Jewish people, and how Israel relates to the Church. Political opinions, academic theories, and religious ideologies abound, but many of them are disconnected from what the Bible actually teaches. My goal is not to promote a political agenda or a modern ideology, but to present what

Scripture plainly says about Israel – its people, its land, and its future.

God chose Israel for a specific and eternal purpose. Through this nation came the covenants, the Scriptures, the prophets, and ultimately Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. As the apostle Paul wrote, “from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah” (Romans 9:5). God’s covenant with Israel was not temporary, nor has it been revoked. It will be fully and finally fulfilled at the return of Jesus Christ. As Messianic Jewish believer David Stern once wrote, “God’s promises to Israel are irrevocable, and the Church does not replace Israel but stands alongside her in God’s redemptive plan.”

One of the great aims of this book is to help readers understand the biblical distinction between Israel and the Church. While both are deeply loved by God, they are not the same, nor are they interchangeable. The Church did not replace Israel; rather, the Church was grafted into the blessings that flow from God’s covenant with Abraham (Romans 11). Failure to recognize this distinction has led to theological confusion, historical injustice, and at times tragic mistreatment of the Jewish people by those claiming the name of Christ. Pastor and theologian John Stott wisely noted, “We must never forget that Jesus was Jewish, the apostles were Jewish, and the roots of our faith are irrevocably Jewish.”

The world views Israel through many lenses. Politicians debate it. Academics analyze it. Religions interpret it. Yet very few approach Israel through the lens that matters most – the Word of God. One must ask: how many of these voices have seriously studied Israel in the Scriptures? How many truly understand Israel’s history, not merely from modern times, but from God’s

eternal perspective? Sadly, not many. This book seeks to return the conversation to its rightful foundation: the Bible.

In the pages ahead, we will look at Israel without speculation or political bias, beginning with what Scripture explicitly declares. We will also offer a concise historical overview to provide context for modern events. From there, we will explore the significance of the Jewish people, the land of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem—three themes that consistently appear in biblical prophecy and will play a central role in God’s future plans.

As Bible teacher Amir Tsarfati has observed, “You cannot understand the Bible without understanding Israel, and you cannot understand Israel without understanding the Bible.” That conviction lies at the heart of this book. Israel is not an afterthought in God’s plan; it is central to it. To understand Israel is to better understand God’s faithfulness, His covenants, and His unfolding purposes for the world.

My prayer is that *All About Israel* will bring clarity where there has been confusion, biblical insight where there has been misinformation, and a renewed appreciation for God’s unchanging promises. Above all, I hope it will inspire readers to see Israel as God sees her—and to recognize that what God has promised, He will surely fulfill.

THE PEOPLE

To understand Israel, one must begin where God began—not with a nation, not with borders, not with ethnicity as the world defines it, but with a person. Scripture is unmistakably clear: God did not choose a group already formed or a nation already established. God chose a man. His name was Abram.

Genesis 12 marks one of the most consequential moments in human history. God called Abram out of obscurity and made promises that would shape the destiny of the world. “The Lord had said to Abram: ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you’” (Genesis 12:1–3). In that moment, God set in motion a redemptive plan that would unfold through Abram’s descendants and culminate in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

This is foundational: Israel exists because God chose a person, not because a people earned divine favor. Abraham was not chosen because he was powerful, righteous, or influential. He was chosen because of God’s sovereign grace and divine purpose. As theologian R.C. Sproul observed, “Election is rooted not in human merit but in divine mercy.” From Abraham came Isaac; from Isaac came Jacob; and from Jacob came the twelve tribes of Israel. A nation was miraculously birthed from a single lineage by the hand of God.

The people who emerged from this lineage are referred to throughout Scripture as Hebrews, Israelites, or Jews. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they reflect different aspects of identity and history. “Hebrew” emphasizes ancestry, “Israelite” highlights covenant identity, and “Jew”

reflects tribal and national continuity. Together, they describe a people uniquely formed and preserved by God.

The Bible frequently refers to Israel as God's "chosen people." This phrase has often been misunderstood. God's choosing was never about favoritism or superiority; it was about purpose and responsibility. God chose Israel to serve as a vessel through whom He would reveal Himself to the world. As Moses told the people, "The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples... but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He swore to your ancestors" (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

Israel's calling was both a privilege and a burden. They were to be a distinct people, set apart – not isolated, but holy. God's intent was that Israel would live in such a way that other nations would see the reality of the one true God. Isaiah declared, "I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6). From the beginning, Israel's mission was global in scope.

Central to that mission was the promise of a Redeemer. The ultimate goal of God's choosing of Israel was the coming of the Messiah. Jesus did not appear randomly in history; He came through a carefully preserved lineage, fulfilling ancient promises and prophecies. The apostle Paul affirmed this truth when he wrote, "Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises... and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah" (Romans 9:4-5).

Messianic Jewish scholar David Stern writes, "The Jewish people are not an accident of history. They are the means by

which God chose to bring redemption to the world.” Jesus Himself affirmed His Jewish identity and mission when He said, “Salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). To understand Jesus fully, one must understand the people from whom He came.

Yet God’s purpose for Israel extended beyond the birth of the Messiah. Israel was called to teach others about God, to model covenant faithfulness, and to bear witness to His holiness. Tragically, Israel often failed in this calling, just as humanity has always struggled with obedience. Scripture does not hide Israel’s shortcomings. God foretold that they would be disobedient – and they were. He said they would be scattered among the nations – and they were. He said they would be discredited and despised – and history tragically confirms this as well.

But Scripture also makes one thing unmistakably clear: Israel would never be destroyed.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God declared, “Only if these decrees vanish from my sight... will Israel ever cease being a nation before me” (Jeremiah 31:36). The psalmist echoes this promise, affirming that God would keep His covenant with David and that his seed would endure forever (Psalm 89:29). The survival of the Jewish people through centuries of persecution, exile, and attempted annihilation is nothing short of miraculous.

Pastor and Bible teacher Chuck Missler once said, “Israel is God’s timepiece. The fact that the Jews exist today is one of the greatest evidences of the reliability of the Bible.” No other people group has been so scattered and yet so preserved. No

other nation has lost its homeland for centuries and then been regathered. Israel is not merely a historical curiosity; it is a living testimony to the faithfulness of God.

This reality challenges common misconceptions. God's choosing of Israel does not mean He loves other peoples less. Scripture affirms that God desires all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). Israel was chosen not as an endpoint, but as a conduit—chosen to bless the nations, not replace them. As theologian Michael Brown explains, "Election in the Bible is about service, not status."

Understanding the people of Israel helps clarify how Christians should view the Jewish people today. They are not relics of a bygone covenant, nor are they spiritually irrelevant. They are beloved for the sake of the patriarchs (Romans 11:28). God's promises to Abraham have not expired, and His covenant faithfulness has not diminished.

The story of Israel's people is ultimately a story about God—His grace, His patience, His discipline, and His unwavering commitment to His Word. God called a man, formed a people, preserved a nation, and through them gave the world a Savior. To study the people of Israel is to witness the unfolding of God's redemptive plan across generations.

As we move forward in this study, it is essential to remember this foundational truth: Israel exists because God willed it so, and Israel endures because God keeps His promises. The people of Israel stand as living proof that what God begins, He faithfully completes.

20 SCRIPTURES

ABOUT ISRAEL

1. **The Covenant:** God made an unconditional and everlasting covenant with Abram (Abraham). It was to make his descendants a great nation. More importantly, through Abraham God would bless all the families of the earth (Gen 12.2,3 Gen 17.7)
2. **The Land:** Under the same covenant God promised Abraham's descendants "all the land of Canaan" (Gen 17.8)
3. **The Line of Descent:** This covenant was established with Abraham's son Isaac and not with Ishmael (Gen 17.21 Gen 26.1-5)
4. **The Birth of Israel:** God renamed Jacob (Isaac's son) as "Israel". Jacob and his descendants inherited the covenant promises given to Abraham – a great nation and their own land (Gen 35.11-12)
5. **God's Chosen People:** God made the nation of Israel His very own people (forever). This was to make a name for Himself in the world (2 Sam 7.23-26, Isa 43.1). God chose Israel to be His witnesses and servant (Isa 43.10)
6. **Conditional Promise:** God promised Israel that if she kept the Mosaic covenant (the Law), then out of all the nations she would be His 'treasured possession' (Deut. 5.2-3, Deut. 6.16-18, Exod. 19.5-8)
7. **Disbursement of Israel:** God warned Israel that if she failed to keep His commandments and statutes (the Law) then she would not receive His blessings. Instead, the people of Israel would be scattered amongst all the nations (Deut. 28.15-68). This happened (the "diaspora").

8. **God's Mercy:** Whilst in this 'scattered state' (Ja 1.1), the disobedient tribes of Israel reflect upon, and return to, God's commandments. Then God will have compassion upon them and gather them from all the nations where they were scattered (Deut. 30.1-3)
9. **The Restoration of Israel's:** God will bring the people of Israel back to their own land (Ezek. 37.21). This is not for Israel's sake, but for the sake of God's holy name (Ezek. 36.16-24). It will be like a "marriage restoration", and Israel will be brought to Zion (Hos 2.14-16, Jer. 3.14)
10. **Israel's Borders:** Israel's future borders are clearly defined in prophecy, the eastern boundary running along the Jordan. These borders are almost identical to the borders of ancient Israel given to Moses (Ezek. 47.13-20, Num 34.1-12)
11. **Israel a Sign:** Israel then becomes "a banner (signal, flag) for the nations" (Isa 11.12). Israel's return will be evident to all and nations will recognize the hand of the God of Israel (Ezek. 36.23)
12. **The Land is Blessed:** Canaan, the land promised to Abraham, will prosper and be blessed. Desolate land becomes "like Eden" (Joel 2.21-27, Isa 51.3, Ezek. 36.35). Zion will be beautiful and glorious (Isa 60.13)
13. **Persecution of Israel:** As foretold in the Abrahamic Covenant, Israel would be a blessing to the world (through salvation in Christ). But, because Israel 'gave birth' to Christ, she is in a continuous spiritual war with demonic forces trying to destroy her (Rev 12.13,17)
14. **Israel's End-time Judgment:** Regathered Israel goes through great suffering (Jacob's trouble, Jer. 30.7) but a remnant is saved (Zech. 13.9) as God pours His Spirit upon them. At this time Israel recognizes Christ as her true Messiah (Mat 24.22, Zech. 12.10-14, Joel 2.28-32)

15. **Israel's Messiah:** Israel's end-time recognition of Christ as her Messiah is like the natural branches of an olive tree being grafted back into their own olive tree. Israel's blindness is removed, and her sins forgiven. Jew and Gentile will be "one flock" in Christ (Rom 11.24-27, Heb 8.8-12, Jn 10.16)
16. **Israel's King:** Christ returns "with all His saints" (1 Thess. 3.13, Jude 14) to Zion and reigns from Jerusalem as ruler and King over all the nations (governments) of earth (Isa 2.1-4, Isa 9.6, Zech. 8.3,14.9, Mat 5.35). Jesus is 'the truth' (Jn 14.6) and Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth (Zech. 8.3)
17. **Peace on Earth:** The Saints reign with Christ for 1000 years and the earth will be at peace. Jews will be revered, and nations will go up from year to year to worship Christ in Jerusalem (Zech. 8.20-23, Zech. 14.16, Isa 11.6-9, Isa 66.18-23, Rev 20.4-6)
18. **Jews and non-Jews:** In the future, non-Jews (strangers) living in Israel will be treated just like native-born Israelites (Ezek. 47.22,23)
19. **The New Jerusalem:** In a figurative sense, the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles, are associated with the gates and walls respectively of the New Jerusalem on the future new earth. The implication is that the New Jerusalem is filled with the elect of God from all eras. And the distinct roles of Israel and the Church in God's redemptive plan is retained into eternity (Rev 21.9-27, 2 Pet 3.7-13, Mat 19.28, Isa 65.17)
20. **Israel Forever:** Just as the new heavens and the new earth remain forever, so the people and name of Israel will remain forever (Isa 66.22)

HISTORY OF ISRAEL

BIBLICAL TIMELINE

Why Israel's History Matters Today

The history of Israel is not ancient trivia, nor is it a disconnected story belonging only to the Jewish people. It is the backbone of biblical revelation and the framework through which God has chosen to reveal Himself to the world. Remove Israel from Scripture, and the Bible collapses into a collection of disconnected stories. Remove Israel from theology, and the Church loses its roots, its context, and much of its prophetic clarity.

Israel's history answers some of the most important questions facing the modern world and the modern Church. Why does this small nation dominate global attention? Why does Jerusalem remain a point of conflict among nations? Why does the Bible devote so much space to a single people group and a specific land? And why do end-time prophecies consistently revolve around Israel?

The answer is simple yet profound: Israel is central to God's redemptive plan—not only in the past, but in the present and the future.

Every major doctrine of the Christian faith is anchored in Israel's history. The covenants were given to Israel. The Scriptures were preserved through Israel. The Messiah came through Israel. The gospel went out from Jerusalem. The apostles were Jewish. The early Church was born in Israel. To understand salvation history without understanding Israel is

impossible. As theologian N. T. Wright observed, “Christian faith is unintelligible apart from the story of Israel.”

Yet today, many Christians know little about Israel’s biblical history. Others have replaced biblical understanding with political opinions, cultural narratives, or theological systems that minimize or dismiss Israel’s ongoing role in God’s purposes. This has led to confusion, misplaced attitudes toward the Jewish people, and a weakened grasp of biblical prophecy.

This chapter invites you to step back and view history through God’s lens. Israel’s story is not merely the rise and fall of kingdoms; it is a divine narrative that demonstrates God’s sovereignty, patience, discipline, and unbreakable faithfulness. From the call of Abraham to the captivity and return, from the silence between the Testaments to the Roman occupation that set the stage for Christ, Israel’s history reveals a God who works through time to accomplish eternal purposes.

As you read this timeline, you are not simply studying the past—you are tracing the foundation of the world you live in today and the prophetic future that still lies ahead.

Introduction: A Nation Born in the Heart of God

Long before Israel existed as a physical nation with borders, armies, and kings, it existed as a divine promise whispered in the ear of an elderly Mesopotamian nomad. The story of Israel is unlike any other national history—it begins not with conquest or revolution, but with covenant. It unfolds not merely through military campaigns and political intrigue, but through divine intervention and prophetic fulfillment. As renowned Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann

observed, "Israel's history is essentially the history of God's faithfulness to His promises." This is the remarkable chronicle of how a family became a people, how slaves became a nation, and how an ancient promise shaped the destiny of the world.

Timeline of the Nation of Israel from Promise to Fulfillment

2085 BC: The Abrahamic Covenant—A Nation Conceived in Promise

The story begins with an audacious divine summons. In approximately 2085 BC, God appeared to a man named Abram in the city of Ur and issued a command that would reverberate through millennia: "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 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" (Genesis 12:1-3).

This wasn't merely a personal calling—it was the birth announcement of a nation. Pastor and theologian John Piper notes, "The call of Abraham was the first ray of light after the darkness of Babel. God was not giving up on the world; He was beginning the rescue operation through one man, one family, one nation." Abraham's obedience to this call demonstrated remarkable faith. The writer of Hebrews would later declare, "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8).

The promise contained four essential elements: land, descendants, blessing, and universal impact. These would become the foundational pillars upon which the entire history of Israel would rest. Biblical scholar John Sailhamer writes, "The Abrahamic covenant is the interpretive lens through which all subsequent biblical history must be understood."

2081 BC: The Land Grant – Eternal Boundaries Established

Four years after the initial call, God formalized His covenant with Abraham in a dramatic ceremony described in Genesis 15. In an ancient Near Eastern treaty ritual involving divided animals, God alone passed between the pieces, signifying an unconditional, unilateral covenant. On that momentous day, the Lord declared: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates – the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites" (Genesis 15:18-21).

This was not a promise for the future – the Hebrew text uses the past tense: "I have given." In God's eternal perspective, the covenant was already accomplished. The boundaries described extended far beyond what Israel has historically controlled, suggesting prophetic dimensions yet to be fulfilled. Theologian Charles Ryrie observes, "The land covenant with Abraham is one of the most significant and yet most debated elements of biblical prophecy. Its unconditional nature and specific boundaries demand careful attention from serious students of Scripture."

1906 BC: Jacob Becomes Israel – A Nation Named

The promise passed from Abraham to his son Isaac, and then to Isaac's son Jacob. Jacob's life was marked by struggle – from wrestling with his brother in the womb to wrestling with God Himself. After an all-night wrestling match with the divine messenger, Jacob received both a blessing and a new identity: "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome" (Genesis 32:28).

The name "Israel" (Yisra'el in Hebrew) means "he who strives with God" or "God strives." This name would define not only the man but the nation that would descend from him. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote, "The name Israel captures the essence of Jewish history—a people in perpetual dialogue with God, sometimes in harmony, often in struggle, but always in relationship." From Jacob's twelve sons would emerge the twelve tribes that formed the nation of Israel, fulfilling the promise made to Abraham generations earlier.

1886 BC: Joseph's Elevation – Providence in Egypt

The continuation of God's promise appeared threatened when Joseph, Jacob's favored son, was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers and transported to Egypt. Yet what seemed like a detour in the divine plan was actually providence at work. After being falsely accused and imprisoned, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and was elevated to second-in-command over all Egypt around 1886 BC.

Joseph's promotion was not merely about personal vindication—it was about preserving the covenant family during a severe famine. As Joseph would later tell his brothers,

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20). New Testament scholar N.T. Wright notes, "The Joseph narrative demonstrates that God's purposes cannot be thwarted by human sin or circumstance. Providence weaves even betrayal into the tapestry of redemption."

1875 BC: Israel in Egypt – From Family to Nation

In 1875 BC, Jacob (Israel) moved his entire family – seventy-five people in all – to Egypt, where Joseph had prepared a place for them in the fertile region of Goshen. There, the aged patriarch was reunited with the son he thought was dead. Genesis 47:27 records, "Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in numbers."

This period of multiplication was essential to God's plan. The family needed to become a nation, and Egypt provided the incubator for that transformation. However, after Joseph's death, "a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt" (Exodus 1:8). This new Pharaoh viewed the growing Israelite population as a threat and subjected them to brutal slavery. For four hundred years, the descendants of Abraham languished in bondage – yet they continued to multiply.

Biblical historian Eugene Merrill explains, "The Egyptian bondage served multiple purposes in God's economy. It forged a disparate family into a unified people, created a desperate longing for deliverance, and set the stage for one of history's most dramatic demonstrations of divine power."

THE JEWISH PEOPLE (ISRAEL)
Spend 400 Years In Egyptian Bondage

1446 BC: The Exodus – Birth of a Nation Through Liberation

The year 1446 BC marks one of the most pivotal moments in biblical history: the Exodus. Through Moses, God confronted Pharaoh with devastating plagues and ultimately delivered Israel from slavery with mighty signs and wonders. At Mount Sinai, God established His covenant with the newly liberated nation, declaring, "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6).

The Exodus was more than a liberation event – it was a nation-defining moment. Pastor Timothy Keller observes, "The Exodus is to Israel what the resurrection is to Christians – the foundational saving act upon which everything else rests." The giving of the Law, the construction of the Tabernacle, and the organization of the tribes all contributed to forming Israel's national identity. They were no longer merely Abraham's descendants; they were God's covenant people with a divine calling.

1000 BC: The United Kingdom Under David – Israel's Golden Age

After centuries of wilderness wandering, conquest of Canaan under Joshua, and the turbulent period of the Judges, Israel reached its zenith around 1000 BC under King David. David united the twelve tribes, conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital, defeated Israel's enemies on every border, and established Israel as a significant regional power.

During David's reign and that of his son Solomon, Israel experienced unprecedented prosperity, influence, and territorial expansion. The kingdom stretched from the Euphrates River to the border of Egypt, approximating the boundaries promised to Abraham a millennium earlier. Scripture records that Solomon's wisdom and wealth attracted dignitaries from distant nations, and "the whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart" (1 Kings 10:24).

Old Testament theologian Bruce Waltke writes, "The Davidic kingdom represents the high-water mark of Israel's national existence and provides the template for messianic expectations. Every subsequent generation would look back to David's reign as the paradigm of what Israel was meant to be."

931 BC: The Kingdom Divided – Unity Shattered

The golden age proved tragically brief. Solomon's spiritual compromises and heavy taxation created tensions that exploded after his death in 931 BC. The kingdom fractured into two nations: the northern kingdom of Israel (ten tribes) and the southern kingdom of Judah (tribes of Judah and Benjamin). This division weakened both kingdoms politically and spiritually.

The northern kingdom, lacking the Davidic dynasty and the Jerusalem temple, quickly descended into idolatry and political instability. The southern kingdom, while possessing the temple and legitimate Davidic kings, also struggled with faithfulness to God's covenant. Prophet after prophet arose to call both kingdoms back to covenant loyalty, but their warnings were largely ignored.

722 BC: The Northern Kingdom Falls – Dispersion Begins

In 722 BC, after two centuries of increasing apostasy, the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians employed a deliberate policy of population displacement, scattering the inhabitants throughout their empire and resettling foreign peoples in Israel's territory. This effectively ended the northern kingdom's distinct identity – they became the "lost tribes of Israel," dispersed among the nations.

This catastrophe fulfilled the warnings Moses had given centuries earlier: "The Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64). The prophets had pleaded with Israel to return to God, but the nation refused to listen. The dispersion demonstrated that God's covenant included both blessings for obedience and consequences for rebellion.

605-586 BC: Judah's Captivity – The Babylonian Exile

The southern kingdom of Judah survived another century after Israel's fall, but they failed to learn from their northern brothers' fate. Beginning in 605 BC, the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem multiple times, deporting the Jewish population in waves. The final siege in 586 BC resulted in the destruction of Solomon's temple and the burning of Jerusalem.

The exile was devastating – not only politically but theologically. How could God's people lose God's land and God's temple? Yet the prophets revealed that even in judgment, God's purposes prevailed. Jeremiah declared that the exile would last seventy years, after which God would restore His

people (Jeremiah 29:10). This precise prophecy demonstrated that exile was not abandonment but discipline, not the end but a refining process.

537 BC: The Return and Restoration – Hope Rekindled

In 537 BC, precisely as Jeremiah had prophesied, the Persian King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Under Zerubbabel's leadership, approximately 50,000 Jews made the difficult journey back to their ancestral homeland. They faced fierce opposition from surrounding peoples, and the work was halted for years. However, encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the people resumed construction, and the second temple was completed in 515 BC.

Though the second temple lacked the glory of Solomon's temple, it represented something profound: God's faithfulness to His covenant promises. The return from exile demonstrated that God had not abandoned His people. Scholar Walter Kaiser notes, "The post-exilic restoration, though modest in scale, carried enormous theological weight. It affirmed that God's purposes for Israel remained intact and that the covenant promises would ultimately be fulfilled."

445 BC: Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem – A City Restored

Nearly a century after the temple's completion, Jerusalem's walls remained in ruins, leaving the city vulnerable and its inhabitants demoralized. In 445 BC, Nehemiah, a Jewish cupbearer serving in the Persian court, received permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. Despite intense opposition and threats, Nehemiah rallied the people and completed the walls in just fifty-two days.

The rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls was more than a construction project—it was a restoration of dignity and security for God's people. Nehemiah's leadership combined prayer, planning, and perseverance. As one commentator observed, "Nehemiah's success demonstrates that spiritual renewal and practical action must work together in God's kingdom."

332-63 BC: The Silent Years – Preparing for Messiah

The period between the Old and New Testaments, approximately 400 years, is often called the "silent years" because no biblical prophets spoke and no Scripture was written. However, these years were far from inactive. In 332 BC, Alexander the Great conquered the region, spreading Greek language and culture throughout the known world. This Hellenization would prepare the way for the New Testament to be written in Greek and rapidly disseminated.

In 63 BC, the Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem, bringing Judea under Roman control. Rome's extensive road system, common language (Greek), and relative peace (*Pax Romana*) created ideal conditions for the spread of the gospel message. The apostle Paul would later write that Christ came in "the fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4)—a divinely appointed moment when all historical circumstances aligned with God's redemptive purposes.

Conclusion

A Call to Remember, Understand, and Respond

The history of Israel from Abraham to the Roman period reveals a pattern of divine faithfulness that transcends human failure. Through promise and fulfillment, blessing and

discipline, exile and restoration, God demonstrated His unwavering commitment to His covenant. The nation that began as a promise to one man became a people through whom blessing would flow to all nations.

As pastor Charles Spurgeon declared, "God's promises are not dependent upon our worthiness but upon His character. What He has promised, He will perform." The story of Israel reminds us that God works through flawed people and broken nations to accomplish His perfect purposes. The same God who promised Abraham a land and descendants, who delivered slaves from Egypt, who brought exiles home from Babylon, would ultimately send His Son through this covenant nation to offer salvation to the world.

The history of Israel leaves every reader with a choice. It demands more than admiration; it requires response.

Israel's survival is not accidental. No other nation has endured exile, dispersion, persecution, and attempted annihilation – yet returned to its land and identity. This reality stands as a living witness to the reliability of Scripture and the faithfulness of God. When God makes a promise, history bends to ensure its fulfillment.

For the Church, Israel's history should provoke humility. We worship a Jewish Messiah, read a Jewish Bible, and participate in covenants first given to Israel. Paul warned Gentile believers not to become arrogant, reminding them that they do not support the root, but the root supports them (Romans 11:18). A proper understanding of Israel guards the Church against theological pride and spiritual amnesia.

Israel's history also calls believers to biblical discernment. The same God who fulfilled His promises in the past will fulfill the prophecies that remain. The regathering of the Jewish people, the centrality of Jerusalem, and the persistence of global hostility toward Israel should awaken the Church to the nearness and seriousness of prophetic fulfillment. As Jesus Himself warned, "When you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:31).

Finally, Israel's history challenges believers to action. Understanding God's plan for Israel should lead to prayer, gratitude, and alignment with God's heart. It should foster love for the Jewish people, respect for God's covenants, and confidence in His promises. The Church is not called to replace Israel, ignore Israel, or politicize Israel—but to understand Israel biblically.

As you move forward in this book, let Israel's history reshape how you read Scripture, how you view current events, and how you anticipate the future. The God who called Abraham, delivered Israel from bondage, preserved them through exile, and sent His Son through them is the same God who is bringing history to its appointed conclusion.

Israel's past proves that God is faithful. Israel's present confirms that His Word endures. And Israel's future assures us that what God has promised, He will surely bring to pass.

The question is not whether God will remain faithful to Israel—He already has.

The question is whether the Church will remain faithful to God's Word.

HISTORY of PALESTINE

Understanding the Name, Land, & Biblical History

Introduction: The Story Behind a Name That Echoes Through Time

Few geographic names carry more historical weight and contemporary controversy than "Palestine." This single word evokes passionate debate, ancient conflicts, and modern political tensions. Yet behind the heated rhetoric lies a fascinating historical narrative that stretches back millennia—a story woven through Scripture, inscribed on ancient monuments, and recorded by empires that rose and fell. To understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today, we must first understand what Palestine actually was, where the name originated, and how a land promised to Abraham's descendants became known by the name of Israel's ancient enemies. As biblical historian Dr. Daniel Master observes, "The name Palestine represents layers of conquest, identity, and competing claims that reflect the entire sweep of Near Eastern history." This is the remarkable chronicle of a name that was weaponized by empires, misunderstood by generations, and remains central to one of history's most enduring conflicts.

The Biblical Foundation: The Philistines – Ancient Enemies of Israel

To grasp the full significance of the name "Palestine," we must begin with the Philistines—a people who would lend their name to a region two millennia after their civilization vanished. The Philistines originated from the Aegean region and settled in Canaan around 1175 BC, establishing themselves along the

Mediterranean coast in five major city-states: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron—collectively known as the Philistine Pentapolis.

The biblical record introduces the Philistines as descendants of Casluhim (Genesis 10:14) who came from Caphtor, widely understood to be Crete. Scripture portrays them as Israel's most persistent adversaries throughout the period of the Judges and early monarchy. The prophet Ezekiel declared God's judgment against them: "I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines and cut off the Kerethites and destroy those remaining along the coast" (Ezekiel 25:16). This prophetic declaration would prove hauntingly accurate.

The Bible tells us, the Philistines came from Caphtor, possibly Crete, and they brought with them advanced military technology, particularly iron weaponry, which gave them significant advantages over the Israelites. During the time of the Judges, "the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years" (Judges 13:1).

The Philistine-Israelite conflict reached its dramatic apex in the confrontation between the Philistine champion Goliath and the young shepherd David. This singular battle, fought in the Valley of Elah, symbolized the larger struggle between these two peoples for control of the Promised Land. After David's victory and eventual coronation as king, he systematically subdued the Philistines, breaking their military power and confining them to their coastal territories.

Archaeological evidence confirms the biblical narrative. Recent DNA evidence, coupled with biblical and archaeological testimonies, suggests that the Philistines originated in Crete and brought vestiges of Minoan culture with them. Professor Aren M. Maeir, who has extensively excavated the Philistine city of Gath, discovered evidence consistent with the biblical accounts, including architectural features that match descriptions of Philistine structures in Scripture.

The Philistine Extinction: A Nation Erased from History

The Philistines' story ends not with a gradual decline but with catastrophic destruction. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon waged war against the Levant around 600 BCE, devastating the Philistine nation and destroying their most important cities. The prophet Jeremiah had warned: "Before Pharaoh attacked Gaza, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines... Gaza will shave her head in mourning; Ashkelon will be silenced" (Jeremiah 47:1, 5).

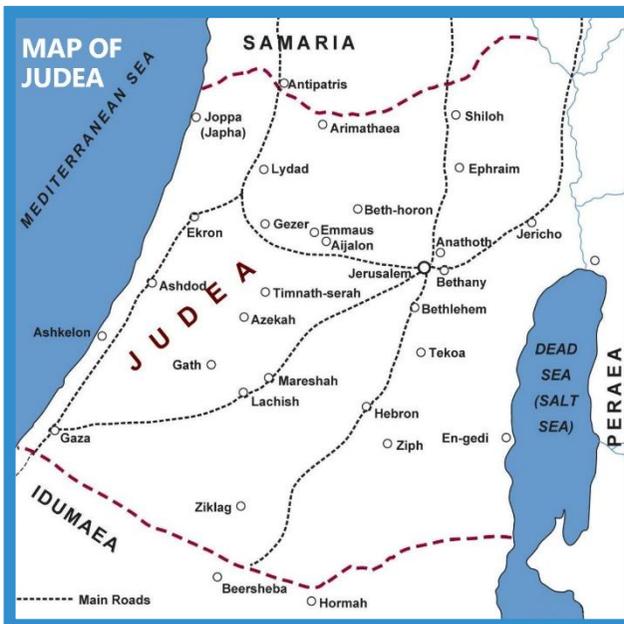
By the fifth century BC, all historical and archaeological trace of the Philistines had disappeared. Whatever remnant survived was absorbed into surrounding populations or eliminated during Alexander the Great's conquests in the fourth century BC. The biblical prophecies against Philistia had been completely fulfilled—the nation that once threatened Israel's existence was utterly erased from history.

This historical reality is crucial: since the Philistines were completely destroyed during the sixth to fourth centuries BCE, it is clear that no modern nation comes from them, including the Palestinians. The linguistic connection between "Philistine"

and "Palestinian" represents not ethnic continuity but rather the appropriation of an ancient name by later empires and peoples.

Beginning of the First Century: Rome's Punishment Against the Jews

After conquering the Jewish nation of Judea in the first century, Rome faced repeated Jewish uprisings. The First Jewish Revolt (66-70 CE) resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple. Sixty-five years later, the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-135 CE) proved even more catastrophic for the Jewish people. According to certain accounts, almost 1,000 villages were destroyed and more than half a million people killed during Rome's brutal suppression of this rebellion.



In the aftermath, the Roman province formerly known as Judaea was **renamed** Syria Palaestina following the Roman suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt. This renaming was

deliberately calculated. According to the prevailing scholarly view, the name change was a punitive measure aimed at severing the symbolic and historical connection between the Jewish people and the land. Historian Seth Schwartz explains that the name was intended to "celebrate the de-Judaization of the province".

The irony is striking: Rome chose to rename the Jewish homeland after the Philistines – Israel's ancient enemies – in a deliberate attempt to erase Jewish identity from the land. According to Lewis Feldman, the appellation was likely chosen because it was common to use the name of the "nearest and most accessible tribe," and Emperor Hadrian was "responsible for several decrees that sought to crush the national and religious spirit of the Jews".

Biblical scholar and pastor Dr. John MacArthur notes, "The Roman renaming of Judea represents one of history's great ironies. By naming the Jewish homeland after a people who had been extinct for over 600 years, Rome thought they could obliterate Jewish claims to the land. Instead, they preserved forever the memory that this was contested territory – land that belonged to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

According to Eusebius of Caesarea, no Jew was thenceforth allowed to set foot in Jerusalem or the surrounding district. Jews who remained in the land were forced to relocate to Galilee, while hundreds of thousands were sold into slavery and dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. Despite this devastation, Jews never completely abandoned their ancestral homeland. As historian Bernard Lewis observed, "Throughout

the two millennia following the Roman destruction, Jews maintained a continuous presence in the Land of Israel, however diminished."

The Silent Centuries: Empires Rise and Fall (135-1517 CE)

For nearly fourteen centuries after the Roman renaming, Palestine was not a nation but a geographic designation for a region conquered and reconquered by successive empires. No independent Palestinian state ever emerged. No ruler chose Jerusalem as their capital. As the document notes, "For the next two thousand years after the Roman conquest, no other state or unique national group developed in Palestine, and no ruler chose Jerusalem as its capital."

During this long period, the region came under Byzantine Christian rule (324-638 CE), then Muslim Arab conquest (638 CE), Crusader occupation (1099-1187), Ayyubid and Mamluk control (1187-1516), and finally Ottoman Turkish domination (1517-1917). Through all these transitions, Jewish communities persisted in cities like Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias, and Safed. Pastor Charles Spurgeon, who visited the Holy Land in the 19th century, wrote about the "scattered remnant of Israel who still cling to the land promised to their fathers, awaiting the fulfillment of prophecy."

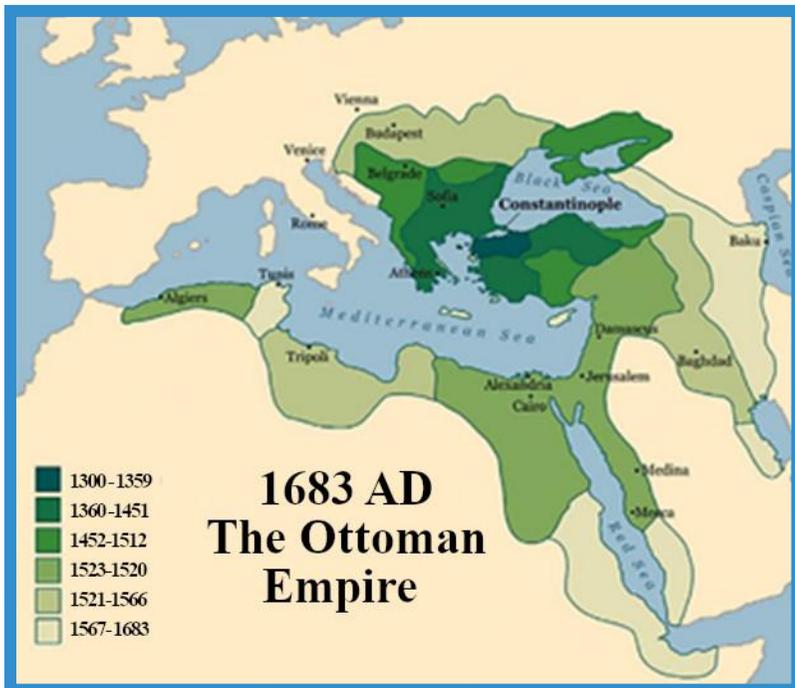
The name "Palestine" during these centuries was used primarily by Western Christians referring to the "Holy Land." During the 2,600 years those who lived in what the Roman Emperor Hadrian renamed Palestine were known as Palestinians, including Christians, Jews, and Muslims—the

term described geographic residence, not ethnic or national identity.

Ottoman Rule (1517-1917): Four Centuries of Neglect

In 1516-1517, the Ottoman Turkish Empire conquered Palestine from the Mamluks, beginning four centuries of Turkish rule that would last until World War I. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566) initially invested in the region, rebuilding Jerusalem's walls and renovating the Dome of the Rock. However, after Suleiman's reign, Palestine entered a long period of decline.

The Ottoman period transformed Palestine administratively but never made it a distinct nation. Palestine was divided into five sanjaks (provincial districts) of Safad, Nablus, Jerusalem, Lajjun and Gaza, which were administratively part of the larger



province of Syria. During most of the Ottoman period, the region that Europeans called "Palestine" was officially just the southern districts of Syria – never an autonomous entity.

By the 19th century, Palestine had become what the document describes as "an unimportant mostly forgotten waste area of the sprawling Ottoman Empire." The region was "reduced to a sparsely populated, impoverished, and barren area." Travelers to the Holy Land during this period consistently reported desolation and sparse population. Mark Twain, visiting in 1867, famously wrote in "The Innocents Abroad" that Palestine was "a desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds – a silent mournful expanse."

Yet throughout this period of Ottoman neglect, Jewish communities endured. "Jews remained throughout these changes," the historical record confirms. "Their numbers grew as exiled Jews returned in periodic waves of immigration; their numbers fell when the area's rulers persecuted them." This continuous Jewish presence – however small – maintained an unbroken connection between the Jewish people and their ancestral homeland spanning nearly two millennia.

Dr. Michael Oren, historian and former Israeli ambassador to the United States, observes: "The Ottoman period demonstrates a crucial historical fact: Palestine was never a thriving independent nation that was colonized. It was a backwater province of successive empires, inhabited by a mixed population including Jews who never relinquished their claim to the land promised to Abraham."

World War I and the British Mandate (1917-1948)

World War I brought seismic changes to Palestine. When the Ottoman Empire allied with Germany and Austria-Hungary, Britain targeted Ottoman territories in the Middle East. In December 1917, British General Edmund Allenby captured Jerusalem, ending four centuries of Ottoman rule. According to prophecy-focused pastor David Jeremiah, "Allenby's conquest of Jerusalem fulfilled biblical prophecies about Jerusalem being 'trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled' (Luke 21:24). It opened the door for the Jewish people's return to their homeland."

The 1917 Balfour Declaration marked a watershed moment in modern Jewish history. British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour declared Britain's support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." This endorsement was revolutionary – for the first time since the Roman destruction, a major world power officially recognized Jewish claims to their ancestral homeland.

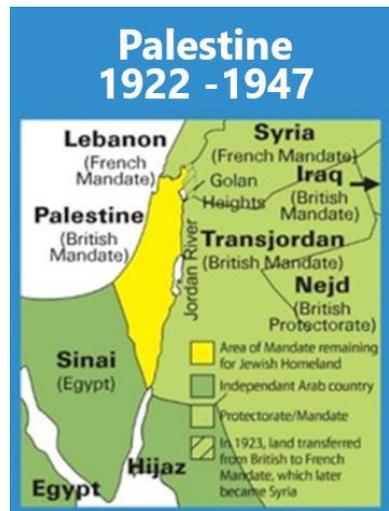


homeland.

In 1920, the League of Nations awarded Britain the Mandate for Palestine, explicitly incorporating the Balfour Declaration into international law through Article 22 of the League Covenant. The Mandate specifically instructed Britain to

"facilitate Jewish immigration and settlement of Palestine." The territory under the original Mandate encompassed both modern Israel and modern Jordan—the land on both sides of the Jordan River.

However, British commitment to the Mandate quickly faltered under Arab pressure. In 1922, Britain violated the Mandate by severing 77 percent of Palestine—all the territory east of the Jordan River—and creating the Arab Emirate of Transjordan (later the Kingdom of Jordan), where Jewish settlement was forbidden. In 1923, Britain further diminished the Jewish homeland by ceding the Golan Heights to French-controlled Syria. The remaining 23 percent of the original Mandate—the narrow strip of land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean—became the contested territory that would ultimately lead to modern Israel's establishment.



During the Mandate period (1920-1948), the term "Palestinian" described both Jewish and Arab residents of the region. Jewish newspapers bore names like "The Palestine Post" (later The Jerusalem Post). Jewish businesses operated as "Palestine Electric Company" and "Palestine Symphony Orchestra." Arabs, by contrast, often rejected the term "Palestinian," preferring to identify as "Southern Syrians" or simply as Arabs. As Bernard Lewis notes, "It was with the British conquest of the

country in World War I that Palestine for the first time since remote antiquity became a separate entity," and many Arab leaders still understood Palestine as part of "Greater Syria".

1948: Israel's Rebirth and the War of Independence

When the British Mandate ended on May 14, 1948, the Jewish leadership declared the establishment of the State of Israel. The next day, five Arab armies—Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq—invaded the newborn nation, attempting to destroy it. Egyptian King Farouk proclaimed, "Our Army has orders to exterminate all Jews." Syrian Prime Minister Khaled al-Azm declared, "We shall eradicate Zionism."



Against overwhelming odds, Israel survived. When armistice agreements were signed in 1949, Jordan illegally occupied and annexed the West Bank (the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria), while Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip. These occupations were not recognized as legitimate by the international community. For nineteen years (1948-1967),

these territories were under Arab control—yet no Palestinian state emerged. Jordan simply renamed the territory "West Bank" to erase its biblical identity, while administering it as Jordanian territory.

Pastor and prophecy teacher J.D. Farag observes, "The rebirth of Israel in 1948 after 1,878 years represents one of history's

most remarkable fulfillments of biblical prophecy. Ezekiel 37's vision of dry bones coming to life before our eyes demonstrates that God's promises to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob remain eternally valid."

The Six-Day War (1967) and Territorial Changes

In May 1967, Egypt's President Nasser mobilized forces in Sinai, expelled UN peacekeepers, blockaded Israel's southern port of Eilat, and formed a military alliance with Jordan and Syria. Syrian and Jordanian leaders issued genocidal threats. Facing encirclement and existential threat, Israel launched a preemptive strike on June 5, 1967.

In six days of fighting, Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank from Jordan. For the first time since 135 CE, Jerusalem's Old City and the Western Wall –



Judaism's holiest site – returned to Jewish control. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan declared at the Western Wall, "We have returned to our most sacred places; we have returned, never to part from them again."

Israel immediately offered to negotiate peace, offering to return captured territories in exchange for recognition and peace treaties. The Arab League responded with the infamous "Three Nos" of Khartoum: No peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel. This rejection of peace would shape the next decades of conflict.

Peace Efforts and Continued Conflict (1973-2000)

The 1973 Yom Kippur War saw Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Judaism's holiest day, attempting to destroy Israel through coordinated invasion. After initial setbacks, Israel again prevailed. This war eventually led to the first breakthrough: Egypt's President Anwar Sadat recognized that military solutions had failed.

The 1979 Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt represented a watershed. Israel, "hoping to foster peace," returned the entire Sinai Peninsula—territory three times the size of Israel itself—to Egypt. This unprecedented withdrawal



demonstrated Israel's willingness to exchange land for genuine peace. In 1994, Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, becoming the second Arab nation to recognize the Jewish state.

Yet peace efforts with the Palestinians proved more elusive. Beginning in 1993, the Oslo Accords established the Palestinian Authority with limited self-governance over parts of the West Bank and Gaza. By 2000, 98 percent of Palestinians lived under Palestinian Authority control. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat a state comprising 97 percent of the West Bank, all of Gaza, and East Jerusalem as a capital. Arafat rejected the offer and launched the Second Intifada—a wave of terrorist attacks that killed over 1,000 Israelis.

"Seeing it had no peace partner," Israel withdrew unilaterally from Gaza in 2005, evacuating all Israeli civilians and soldiers. Rather than building a prosperous entity, Hamas – designated a terrorist organization by the United States and European Union – seized control and transformed Gaza into a launch pad for rocket attacks against Israeli civilians. Between 2005 and the present, Hamas has fired thousands of rockets into Israeli towns and cities, deliberately targeting non-combatants.

Understanding the Historical Narrative: A Biblical Perspective

From a biblical and historical perspective, several crucial truths emerge from Palestine's complex history:

First, the name "Palestine" originated as a Roman punishment designed to erase Jewish identity from the land God promised to Abraham's descendants. It was never the name of an independent nation or distinct people group. As historian David Jacobson observed, "Palestine" did not have the negative connotations for Jews in ancient times that some attribute to it today – it was simply a geographic designation used interchangeably with "Judea" and "the Holy Land."

Second, there is no ethnic or historical continuity between the ancient Philistines and modern Palestinians. The Philistines were an Aegean people who disappeared from history six centuries before Christ. Modern Palestinians are predominantly Arab peoples whose ancestors arrived in the region primarily during the Arab conquests of the seventh century and subsequent migrations. The shared name represents linguistic coincidence, not genetic or cultural continuity.

Third, Jews maintained continuous presence in their ancestral homeland throughout two millennia of exile and persecution. Though often reduced to small communities, Jews never abandoned cities like Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias. This unbroken connection is unique among ancient peoples and demonstrates the enduring bond between the Jewish people and the Promised Land.

Fourth, modern Palestinian nationalism emerged relatively recently – primarily as a response to Zionism in the 20th century. It was only after the Jews re-inhabited their historic homeland of Judea and Samaria after the Six-Day War that the concept of a distinct Arab Palestinian nation was created and marketed worldwide. For most of Islamic history, the region's Muslim inhabitants identified primarily as Arabs or as part of Greater Syria, not as "Palestinians."

Conclusion: A Name That Testifies to God's Faithfulness

The story of Palestine is ultimately the story of God's covenant faithfulness to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even when empires attempted to erase the Jewish connection to the land by renaming it after Israel's extinct enemies, God preserved His people and brought them home.

The apostle Paul writes, "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). God's covenant promises to give the land to Abraham's descendants did not expire when Rome renamed Judea. They did not become void during centuries of Ottoman neglect. They remained valid through crusades, conquests, and conflicts. And in 1948, after the darkest period of Jewish history – the Holocaust that murdered six million

Jews – the nation of Israel was miraculously reborn in the land promised to Abraham 4,000 years earlier.

Pastor John Hagee powerfully summarizes: "The rebirth of Israel is the greatest miracle of the 20th century. Against all odds, in fulfillment of biblical prophecy, the Jewish people returned to their ancient homeland. This is not political coincidence – it is divine providence. God keeps His promises."

Understanding Palestine's true history – stripped of modern propaganda and political agendas – reveals a profound truth: the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea has been at the center of God's redemptive plan from the beginning. It was promised to Abraham, conquered by Joshua, ruled by David, prophesied over by prophets, walked by Jesus, and reclaimed by the Jewish people in our generation.

As we watch current events unfold in this controversial region, we do well to remember that behind the political conflicts, news headlines, and diplomatic failures lies a deeper reality: God's eternal covenant with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The name "Palestine" – intended by Rome as an insult – instead became a testament to God's sovereignty over history. The people Rome tried to erase have returned. The nation the world thought was dead has been resurrected. And the God who keeps His promises remains faithful, generation after generation, fulfilling His Word exactly as He declared it would be fulfilled.

THE LAND

God's Eternal Promise to Israel



Map of Land Promised by God

Introduction:

A Divine Real Estate Transaction Unlike Any Other

Four thousand years ago, in a covenant ceremony unlike anything before or since, God Himself passed between severed animal carcasses and swore an oath that would shape world history. The promise was simple yet staggering: specific, measurable, physical territory—from one great river to another—would belong to Abraham's descendants forever. This was not metaphor. This was not spiritual allegory. This was divine real estate law inscribed by the finger of God in an unconditional, irrevocable covenant. As biblical scholar Walter Kaiser notes, "The land promise to Abraham is one of the most concrete, literal, and geographically specific promises in all of Scripture." Yet despite this crystal-clear divine grant, Israel has

never fully possessed what God declared was theirs. Why? The answer lies in understanding two distinct but complementary covenants—one granting eternal title, the other governing temporary possession. This distinction between ownership and occupancy holds the key to comprehending both Israel's past dispersion and their prophesied future restoration to the fullest extent of the Promised Land.

The Abrahamic Covenant: Eternal Title to the Land

The Promise Declared (Genesis 15:18-21)

In Genesis chapter 15, God established His covenant with Abraham in a dramatic ceremony laden with ancient Near Eastern legal significance. The covenant of the pieces, as Jewish tradition calls it, involved Abraham preparing specific animals—a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove, and a pigeon—cutting them in two, and arranging the halves opposite each other. Typically in ancient treaty ceremonies, both parties would walk between the severed animals, essentially declaring, "May what happened to these animals happen to me if I break this covenant."

But something extraordinary occurred. Abraham fell into a deep sleep—a divinely induced slumber—and only God passed between the pieces, represented by "a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch" (Genesis 15:17). The significance is profound: God alone bound Himself to keep this covenant. Abraham made no promise. The covenant was unilateral, unconditional, and utterly dependent on God's faithfulness rather than human performance.

Then God declared the specific boundaries: "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gergashites, and the Jebusites'" (Genesis 15:18-21).

Notice the verb tense: "I give" (NKJV) or "I have given" (some translations emphasize the Hebrew perfect tense). From God's eternal perspective, the transaction was already complete. Pastor John MacArthur explains: "The land covenant with Abraham establishes Israel's perpetual right to the land. It is an unconditional covenant that cannot be broken. God will fulfill it regardless of Israel's obedience or disobedience."

The Boundaries Defined

According to Genesis 15:18 and Joshua 1:4, the land God gave to Israel included everything from the Nile River in Egypt to Lebanon (south to north) and everything from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates River (west to east). Additional biblical passages clarify these extensive boundaries:

Southern Boundary: From the River of Egypt (likely the Wadi el-Arish, though some scholars believe it references the Nile itself) along the wilderness of Zin and the Red Sea near modern Eilat (Exodus 23:31; Numbers 34:3-5).

Western Boundary: The Great Sea—the Mediterranean coast extending from Gaza northward beyond modern Israel's coastline (Joshua 1:4; Numbers 34:6).

Northern Boundary: From the Mediterranean through Lebanon to Mount Hor, then extending to the entrance of Hamath in Syria, reaching the Euphrates River (Numbers 34:7-9; Deuteronomy 11:24).

Eastern Boundary: The Euphrates River in Mesopotamia, encompassing territory that today includes parts of Iraq, Syria, and Jordan (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7).

The land God promised includes all of modern Israel, plus all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, some of Egypt and Syria, all of Jordan, and portions of Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Biblical geographer James M. Monson notes, "The boundaries described in Genesis 15 represent the

maximum extent of God's land grant to Abraham's descendants—a territory vastly larger than any Israel has historically controlled."

The Confirmation and Expansion of the Promise

God didn't make this promise once and forget about it. Scripture records that God confirmed the land covenant at least 55 times with an oath and stated at least 12 times that the covenant was everlasting. The promise was reaffirmed to Isaac: "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father" (Genesis 26:3). Then to Jacob: "The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land" (Genesis 35:12).

The promise appears repeatedly throughout Scripture: in the blessing of Jacob before his death (Genesis 48:4), in God's commissioning of Moses (Exodus 3:8, 17), in the instructions to Joshua (Joshua 1:2-4), in the Psalms (Psalm 105:8-11), and throughout the prophets. Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, founder of Ariel Ministries, observes: "The sheer repetition of the land promise throughout Scripture underscores its centrality to God's covenantal program. This is not peripheral theology—it is foundational to understanding God's faithfulness and His redemptive plan."

The Abrahamic Covenant granted Israel the **title** to the land—permanent, irrevocable ownership that no human sin or failure could nullify. As pastor Charles Ryrie states in his dispensational theology: "The Abrahamic covenant gives the Jewish people the title deed to the land of Israel in perpetuity. While their possession of that land has been interrupted by their disobedience, their title to it has never been revoked."

The Mosaic Land Covenant: Conditional Possession

A Second Covenant for a Different Purpose

While the Abrahamic Covenant established Israel's eternal title to the land, God instituted a second covenant—detailed in Deuteronomy 28-30—that governed their **possession** and enjoyment of that land. Deuteronomy 29:1 makes the distinction clear: "These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb."

This is the Palestinian Covenant (or Land Covenant), and unlike the unconditional Abrahamic promise, it contained specific conditions for Israel's continued occupation of their inheritance. The Palestinian Covenant has many similarities to the Mosaic Covenant made at Mount Sinai but is a separate and distinct covenant.

The Blessings for Obedience (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)

Moses laid out the terms clearly: "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 28:1-2).

The promised blessings were comprehensive and tangible:

- **Agricultural abundance:** Blessed crops, multiplied herds, overflowing barns (vv. 3-5, 8, 11)
- **Military victory:** Enemies defeated, attacks repelled (v. 7)
- **National prosperity:** Economic blessing, abundant rainfall, productive labor (vv. 6, 12)
- **International influence:** Israel elevated above other nations, becoming the head and not the tail (vv. 10, 13)

- **Divine favor:** Established as God's holy people, a testimony to all nations (v. 9)

An obedient Israel would be blessed everywhere—in the city and in the country, when they come in and when they go out. Their storehouses would be blessed and full of food. These blessings were not merely spiritual but profoundly physical and national, tied directly to the land itself.

The Curses for Disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68)

The covenant then outlined the consequences of disobedience—and the curse section is significantly longer and more detailed than the blessing section. "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you" (Deuteronomy 28:15).

The curses escalated in severity:

First Level—Agricultural and Economic Disasters (vv. 16-24): Failed crops, barren livestock, drought, and poverty would plague a disobedient Israel.

Second Level—Military Defeat and National Humiliation (vv. 25-37): Israel would be defeated by enemies, scattered, and become an object of horror among all kingdoms of the earth.

Third Level—Foreign Invasion and Siege (vv. 38-48): A fierce nation would come from afar, besieging Israel's cities until they were destroyed. This prophecy was horrifically fulfilled in the Babylonian conquest (586 BC) and the Roman siege (70 AD).

Fourth Level—Dispersion from the Land (vv. 49-68): The ultimate curse—exile and dispersion: "Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64).

Biblical scholar Daniel Block notes concerning Deuteronomy 28, "The repetition of the curse, in all its many aspects, was intended to make a deep impression on Israel. If they were not motivated by the blessings, they should be motivated by these terrible curses."

Importantly, nowhere in these warnings does God threaten to revoke Israel's **title** to the land. The curses affect **possession** and enjoyment, not ownership. As theologian Paul Enns explains: "While Israel's prosperity is closely tied to her obedience to God's commands, and they will still be punished for their disobedience to God, there is coming a day when God will return them to the land."

The Critical Distinction: Title vs. Possession

Understanding the difference between title and possession is essential to grasping Israel's history and future. Consider a modern analogy: If you own a house (you hold the title deed), but you commit a crime and are sent to prison, you lose **possession** of your house—you cannot live in it or enjoy it. However, you have not lost **title** to the property. When you complete your sentence, you can return to your home because the ownership was never revoked.

Similarly, the Abrahamic Covenant (circa 2000 BC) gave Israel the **title deed** to the land for eternity. The Mosaic Land Covenant (circa 1250 BC) established the **terms of possession**—the conditions under which they could inhabit and enjoy what they owned. Pastor John Hagee explains: "The Jews have lost possession of the land because of their disobedience, but they have never lost their God-given title. No amount of human sin can revoke what God has unconditionally promised."

Israel's Historical Loss of Possession

The Pattern of Disobedience

Tragically, Israel did not obey the Lord. Despite God's patience and repeated warnings through the prophets, both the northern kingdom

(Israel) and southern kingdom (Judah) turned to idolatry and injustice. The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, and others pleaded with the nation to return to covenant faithfulness, warning that the curses of Deuteronomy would surely come.

Jeremiah lamented: "Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the Lord your God" (Jeremiah 2:19). Ezekiel proclaimed God's judgment: "Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem... and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst'" (Ezekiel 22:19-20).

The Assyrian Conquest (722 BC)

The northern kingdom fell first. In 722 BC, the Assyrian Empire conquered Israel and deported the ten northern tribes, scattering them throughout the Assyrian domains. The people were dispersed among the nations, their distinct tribal identities eventually lost to history—they became known as the "lost tribes of Israel." This fulfilled Deuteronomy's warning: "The Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other" (Deuteronomy 28:64).

The Babylonian Exile (586 BC)

The southern kingdom of Judah survived another 136 years but ultimately suffered the same fate. In 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's magnificent temple, carrying the Jewish population into captivity. Jeremiah had prophesied exactly seventy years of exile (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10), demonstrating that even in judgment, God's covenant faithfulness remained intact.

The Roman Destruction and Diaspora (70 AD and Beyond)

After returning from Babylonian exile in 537 BC and rebuilding the temple, the Jewish people experienced periods of independence and foreign rule. However, the ultimate dispersion came at Roman hands. In 70 AD, after the Jewish revolt, Rome destroyed Herod's temple and slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Jews. Following the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 AD), Rome systematically expelled Jews from Jerusalem and renamed the entire region "Syria Palaestina" to erase Jewish connection to the land.

For the next 1,813 years, Jews would wander among the nations, suffering persecution, pogroms, expulsions, and ultimately the Holocaust—exactly as Deuteronomy 28:64-68 had prophesied. Dr. Michael Brown, Jewish believer and biblical scholar, writes: "The curses of Deuteronomy 28 read like a history of Jewish suffering through the centuries. Every warning came to pass with horrifying precision, testifying both to the reality of God's word and the costliness of covenant disobedience."

Yet through all these centuries of dispersion, Jews never abandoned their claim to the land. "Next year in Jerusalem" remained the perpetual hope, recited at every Passover. They had lost **possession**, but not **title**.

The Promise of Restoration

God's Covenant Faithfulness Despite Human Failure

The most remarkable aspect of the Land Covenant is found in Deuteronomy 30—the promise of restoration. Even knowing Israel would fail and be scattered, God promised their eventual return:

"When all these things happen to you—the blessings and curses I have set before you—and you come to your senses while you are in all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart

and all your soul... then he will restore your fortunes, have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. Even if your exiles are at the farthest horizon, he will gather you and bring you back from there. The Lord your God will bring you into the land your ancestors possessed, and you will take possession of it" (Deuteronomy 30:1-5).

This promise is unconditional in its ultimate fulfillment. Even though God knew full well Israel would turn from Him and His covenant, He promised to one day restore them to the land and have compassion on them. Therefore, the ultimate outcome of this covenant does not depend on Israel and its obedience, but instead it depends on God and His faithfulness.

The Prophets Confirm the Restoration

The prophets consistently declared that Israel's dispersion was not the end of the story. Jeremiah proclaimed: "Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that it shall no more be said, 'The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers" (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

Ezekiel's famous vision of the dry bones coming to life (Ezekiel 37) depicts Israel's resurrection as a nation: "Thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel... I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land'" (Ezekiel 37:12, 14).

Amos declared with divine authority: "'I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them,' says the Lord your God" (Amos 9:15).

Isaiah prophesied multiple times about Israel's return: "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 43:5-6).

These are not metaphors about the church or spiritual Israel—they are explicit promises about the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob returning to their ancestral homeland. As Dr. Randall Price, expert on biblical prophecy and Israel, states: "The prophetic promises of Israel's restoration are too numerous, too specific, and too consistently literal in their language to be spiritualized away. God meant what He said about bringing His people back to their land."

The Modern Restoration: Prophecy Fulfilled Before Our Eyes

The Beginning of Aliyah (1800s-1948)

God promised to regather Israel, and He has been doing exactly that. Beginning in the late 1800s, Jews started returning to their ancestral homeland in increasing numbers—a movement called Aliyah (Hebrew for "going up"). Theodor Herzl founded the modern Zionist movement in 1897, declaring, "If you will it, it is no dream." But as believers in Scripture understand, this was not merely human will—it was divine providence fulfilling ancient prophecies.

Despite Turkish rule, Arab opposition, British restrictions, and global indifference, Jews continued immigrating to the land. They purchased property legally, drained swamps, planted forests, built cities, and revived the Hebrew language—dead for nearly 2,000 years. This linguistic resurrection alone is unprecedented in human history.

The Miracle of 1948

On May 14, 1948—after the Holocaust had murdered six million Jews—David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of

Israel. For the first time since 135 AD, a sovereign Jewish nation existed in the Promised Land. Five Arab armies immediately invaded, determined to destroy the newborn state. Israel, outnumbered and outgunned, miraculously survived and prevailed.

Pastor David Jeremiah reflects: "The rebirth of Israel in 1948 fulfilled Ezekiel 37's prophecy of dry bones coming to life. After 1,878 years of dispersion, the Jewish people returned to their homeland—not because of human power, but because God keeps His promises."

The Six-Day War and Jerusalem (1967)

In 1967, facing imminent destruction from surrounding Arab nations, Israel launched a preemptive strike. In six days of fighting, Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, Gaza, and—most significantly—the Old City of Jerusalem and the West Bank (biblical Judea and Samaria). For the first time since 70 AD, Jews could pray at the Western Wall. General Moshe Dayan declared, "We have returned to our most sacred places; we have returned, never to part from them again."

Believers in biblical prophecy recognize these events as stages in the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 30 and the restoration promises throughout the prophets. Israel has returned to the land after 2,000 years of exile, exactly as God promised.

The Land Still Contested

Yet Israel currently possesses only a small fraction of the territory described in Genesis 15 and Joshua 1. The modern State of Israel, even including the disputed territories, encompasses approximately 10,000-12,000 square miles. The land promised to Abraham from the Nile to the Euphrates would encompass over 300,000 square miles—roughly 25-30 times larger than current Israeli territory.

Much of the promised land remains under the control of other nations: Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia all occupy

territory within the biblical boundaries. The international community disputes even Israel's current borders, with the "West Bank" (biblical Judea and Samaria), East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights all contested.

Why Hasn't Israel Possessed All the Land?

The Answer: Conditional Possession Within Unconditional Ownership

Israel has not yet possessed the full extent of the Promised Land because they have not yet met the conditions of the Land Covenant outlined in Deuteronomy. While the Abrahamic Covenant guarantees their ultimate title to all the land, the Mosaic Land Covenant stipulates that full possession requires national obedience and covenant faithfulness.

Deuteronomy was explicit: "Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea—**IF you faithfully obey the Lord your God and are careful to follow all his commands**" (Deuteronomy 11:24, emphasis added; see also Deuteronomy 19:8-9).

Historical Glimpses of the Greater Borders

Israel has briefly approached the full promised boundaries during only two periods:

Under King David (circa 1000 BC): David defeated surrounding nations and established Israel's dominion from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates River. "And David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people" (2 Samuel 8:15). David's kingdom extended north to Damascus and east beyond the Jordan.

Under King Solomon (circa 960 BC): Solomon expanded on his father's conquests, and Scripture records: "He was the ruler over all the kings from the Euphrates River even to the land of the Philistines, and as far as the border of Egypt" (2 Chronicles 9:26). For a brief, shining moment, Israel controlled territory approximating God's promise to Abraham.

Yet even this fell short of the full Genesis 15 boundaries, and it was tragically temporary. Solomon's spiritual compromises and heavy taxation led to the kingdom's division after his death. Israel would never again control such extensive territory—until the prophesied Millennial Kingdom.

Biblical commentator David Guzik notes: "For a very brief time, under Solomon, and possibly again under Jeroboam II, the children of Israel ruled this territory, as a token of the final and permanent possession they will have in the future."

The Ultimate Fulfillment: The Millennial Kingdom

Christ's Return and Reign

The complete, permanent, and final fulfillment of the land promises awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Millennial Kingdom. Numerous prophecies describe a future time when Messiah will reign from Jerusalem over all the earth, and Israel will possess the full extent of the land promised to Abraham.

Zechariah prophesies: "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—'The Lord is one,' and His name one" (Zechariah 14:9). Isaiah declares that in that day, "The Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously" (Isaiah 24:23).

Ezekiel 47-48 provides detailed descriptions of the tribal boundaries during the Millennial Kingdom, with Jerusalem as the center and the land divided among the twelve tribes. The boundaries described

encompass the full extent of the Genesis 15 promise. As Dr. John Walvoord, renowned prophecy scholar, explains: "The land promises to Abraham will find their complete and literal fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom when Christ reigns from Jerusalem and Israel possesses all the territory from the Nile to the Euphrates."

The New Covenant Enabling Full Possession

What makes permanent, full possession possible in the Millennium? The New Covenant, which transforms Israel's heart and enables them to keep God's commands perfectly. Jeremiah prophesied: "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... 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" (Jeremiah 31:31, 33).

Ezekiel similarly declared: "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 36:26-28).

Under the New Covenant, Israel will finally have both the **title** (from the Abrahamic Covenant) and perfect **obedience** (enabled by the New Covenant), resulting in permanent, full **possession** of all the land God promised. Pastor Chuck Smith articulates this beautifully: "When Jesus returns, the land promises will be fulfilled completely. Israel will finally possess from the Nile to the Euphrates, not because of their righteousness, but because of God's covenant faithfulness and the transforming power of the New Covenant that writes God's law on their hearts."

“Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.”

Joshua 21:45

God Keeps His Promises: The Certainty of the Land Covenant

The Character of God Guarantees Fulfillment

The land promises to Israel ultimately depend not on human faithfulness but on divine character. Numbers 23:19 declares: "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

The apostle Paul, writing about Israel's current unbelief and future restoration, affirms: "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). What God has promised to Israel—including the land—He will perform, regardless of temporary unbelief or disobedience.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum emphasizes: "If God can break His promises to Israel concerning the land, then we cannot trust any of His promises, including the promises concerning our salvation. God's faithfulness to Israel is the foundation for confidence in all His covenant promises."

Modern Implications and Applications

Understanding the biblical teaching on the land has profound implications for how believers view current events in the Middle East:

First, we recognize that Israel's modern return to the land is not political coincidence but prophetic fulfillment. God is keeping His promise to regather His people (Deuteronomy 30; Ezekiel 36-37).

Second, we understand that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not merely political or territorial but has deep spiritual and covenantal dimensions. The land belongs to Israel by divine grant, though current possession remains incomplete pending full covenant faithfulness.

Third, we recognize that ultimate peace in the Middle East will not come through human diplomacy alone but through the return of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, who will reign from Jerusalem and establish justice for all nations (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Fourth, we remember God's promise to Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse" (Genesis 12:3). How nations treat Israel matters to God because His covenant reputation is at stake.

Pastor John Hagee declares: "Christians who understand Scripture cannot be neutral about Israel. God promised the land to Abraham's descendants through Isaac and Jacob. That covenant stands today. Those who stand with Israel stand with God's covenant purposes."

Conclusion: The Land Promise Stands Forever

The story of the Promised Land is ultimately the story of God's unwavering faithfulness to His covenant. Despite Israel's repeated disobedience, God has never revoked the title deed established in Genesis 15. Despite 2,000 years of dispersion and persecution, God is bringing His people home, exactly as He promised in Deuteronomy 30.

The distinction between title and possession explains both Israel's historical loss of the land through disobedience and their certain future possession of it in fullness through divine grace. The Abrahamic Covenant gave them eternal ownership. The Mosaic Land Covenant established conditions for occupation. The New Covenant will enable perfect obedience. And the Millennial reign of Christ will culminate in complete, permanent possession of every square mile from the Nile to the Euphrates.

As we watch the modern State of Israel thriving in their ancient homeland—speaking the resurrected Hebrew language, making the desert bloom, and defending themselves against overwhelming opposition—we witness living proof that our God keeps His

promises. The land that God swore to give Abraham's descendants will be fully theirs when Messiah reigns from Jerusalem.

Until that day, believers should remember the words of Psalm 122:6: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May those who love you be secure.'" We pray for peace while recognizing that lasting peace awaits the return of the King who will sit on David's throne and rule the nations with justice.

The land promise stands. God's covenant with Abraham remains in force. And one day soon, Israel will possess from the River of Egypt to the great River Euphrates, fulfilling every word that God has spoken. As Amos declared with prophetic certainty: "I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit 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" (Amos 9:14-15).

This is not wishful thinking. This is not theological speculation. This is the guaranteed promise of the covenant-keeping God who cannot lie. The land belongs to Israel by divine grant, and God always keeps His word.

"And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever." Genesis 13:14-15

"I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." Genesis 17:7-8

THE CITY JERUSALEM

At the Center of God's Eternal Plan

Introduction: A City Unlike Any Other

Stand in the heart of any great city—New York with its towering skyscrapers reaching toward heaven, London with its thousand years of history echoing through ancient streets, Paris with its cultural magnificence, Rome with its imperial grandeur, or Moscow with its political power—and you witness humanity's greatest achievements. Yet all these capitals of commerce, culture, and conquest pale into insignificance compared to one modest Middle Eastern city that has witnessed more tears, prayers, blood, and glory than all others combined. Jerusalem. The very name resonates with supernatural significance that transcends mere geography or politics.

There is no other city on the face of the earth as important as the city of Jerusalem. But why? What makes this ancient hilltop settlement—lacking natural resources, strategic ports, or economic advantages—the most contested piece of real estate in human history? The answer lies not in human estimation but in divine declaration. God Himself has called Jerusalem "His Own" and chosen it as the eternal focal point of His redemptive plan for humanity. As pastor John Hagee powerfully states, "Jerusalem is not just another city. It is THE city—the place where heaven touches earth, where prophecy becomes reality, where God's eternal purposes are unveiled."

This is the story of Jerusalem—past, present, and future—a city that has been destroyed and rebuilt, conquered and liberated, mourned over and celebrated, cursed by nations and blessed

by God. It is the story of where Jesus shed His precious blood, where He will return as conquering King, and where God Himself will eternally dwell with His redeemed people.

The Biblical Testimony: God's Chosen City

Jerusalem's Unprecedented Prominence in Scripture

Jerusalem is mentioned over 800 times in the Bible. To grasp the magnitude of this, consider that no other geographic location receives even remotely similar attention. By comparison, Babylon is mentioned about 287 times, Egypt approximately 611 times. Yet Jerusalem—this small city in the Judean hills—dominates biblical narrative, poetry, prophecy, and promise with unparalleled frequency and significance.

But the quantity of mentions pales before the quality of God's declarations about this city. Scripture records God's own words: "But I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there, and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel" (2 Chronicles 6:6). This is not merely human preference or historical accident—it is divine election. It is the one place in all of the world that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has singled out and called "His Own."

God's commitment to Jerusalem extends beyond temporal considerations into eternity: "For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually" (2 Chronicles 7:16). Biblical scholar Walter Kaiser observes, "When God says 'forever' and 'perpetually' about Jerusalem, He is not employing poetic exaggeration. He is declaring an eternal covenant reality that transcends all political changes, military

conquests, or historical epochs. Jerusalem's significance is rooted in God's eternal purposes, not human achievements."

Jerusalem's Role in Redemptive History

Jerusalem's significance encompasses the entire arc of biblical revelation. It is where Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac, demonstrating faith that would characterize God's people (Genesis 22). It is where the Son of God shed His precious blood. It is where Jesus ascended into Heaven. These are not random events but divinely orchestrated moments that mark Jerusalem as the theater of redemption.

The prophecy continues: It is where Jesus will return to be crowned King of Kings. It is the city from which Jesus will reign over all the nations of the world. The consistency of Jerusalem's centrality from Genesis to Revelation demonstrates God's unwavering commitment to this singular location. Dr. David Jeremiah emphasizes, "Jerusalem is not replaceable or interchangeable with any other city. When Scripture speaks of Jerusalem, it means literal, geographical Jerusalem – the same city David conquered, where Solomon built the temple, where Jesus died and rose again, and where Jesus will return to reign."

Finally, Jerusalem will be the scene of history's last battle when Satan rallies the nations at the end of the Millennium and leads them in revolt against the Lord. And ultimately, Jerusalem is where God Himself will come to reside eternally with the Redeemed. From beginning to end, Jerusalem stands at the center of God's plan. It is no wonder that Jerusalem has always been an important topic of Bible prophecy.

Historical Jerusalem: The City of David

The Conquest and Establishment (Circa 1000 BC)

Historically, David reigned from Hebron for seven years while he served as king of Judah. But after he was crowned the king of both Judah and Israel, he decided to move his headquarters northward to a more central location.

The strategic wisdom of David's choice cannot be overstated. Hebron, while significant as Abraham's burial place and David's initial capital, lay too far south to effectively govern the northern tribes. David needed a capital that belonged to no tribe, offended no faction, and occupied a defensible position central to both kingdoms.

The city he selected was Jebus, which was also known as "the stronghold of Zion" (2 Samuel 5:7). The Jebusites, descendants of Canaan, had held this fortress for centuries, confident in its impregnability. They mocked David's approach, declaring that even the blind and lame could defend their city against his army. They were catastrophically wrong.

After he conquered it, the name was changed to Jerusalem, but it was often referred to as "the city of David" (2 Samuel 5:9). This conquest was more than military victory—it was prophetic fulfillment. God had promised David an eternal throne and dynasty, and Jerusalem would become the permanent seat of that throne.

This occurred 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus—or some 3,000 years from where we stand now in human history. The antiquity of Jerusalem's significance cannot be overstated. For

three millennia, this city has stood at the crossroads of history, faith, and prophecy.

Archaeological confirmation of biblical Jerusalem continues to emerge. The City of David is located on a narrow ridge running south of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, on the eastern ridge, just west of the Kidron Valley and east of the Tyropoeon Valley. Excavations have revealed ancient fortifications, water tunnels, and inscriptions that link the site to biblical history.

Among the most remarkable discoveries is the Siloam Inscription, an ancient Hebrew inscription found in the Siloam Tunnel. According to the Bible, King Hezekiah constructed this tunnel to connect the Gihon Spring outside the city walls to the Siloam Pool inside the city, ensuring a water supply during an Assyrian siege. This engineering marvel, carved through solid bedrock over 2,700 years ago, remains accessible to visitors today—tangible evidence of biblical narrative's historical accuracy.

Solomon's Temple: The Dwelling Place of God's Name

After King David, his son Solomon became king and built the temple in Jerusalem. The construction of Solomon's Temple represented the culmination of David's dream and God's promise. This was not merely a religious building but the ordained dwelling place of God's manifest presence among His people.

The temple's magnificence defied description. Its foundation stones, some weighing hundreds of tons, were precision-cut and perfectly fitted without mortar. Its interior was overlaid with pure gold, its furnishings crafted according to divine specifications. The Holy of Holies, a perfect cube measuring 20

cubits in each direction, housed the Ark of the Covenant and represented the throne room of the Almighty.

For nearly four centuries, this temple stood as the spiritual center of Israel and the focal point of Jewish worship. Three times annually, during the pilgrimage feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, hundreds of thousands of Jews would stream into Jerusalem to worship at the temple, fulfilling God's command and reinforcing Jerusalem's centrality to Jewish identity and faith.

Destruction, Exile, and the Prophets' Warnings

After Solomon, the nation would become divided and turn its back on God. The Lord mercifully raised up prophets to warn them and call them to repentance.

For generations, prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, and others pleaded with Judah to return to covenant faithfulness. They warned that continued rebellion would result in Jerusalem's destruction. Jeremiah's messages were particularly explicit and heartbreaking. He wept over the city, pronouncing judgment while simultaneously expressing God's grief over what was coming.

When they refused to repent, the prophets prophesied that the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed, and the nation would be taken into captivity (Jeremiah 9:11). Jeremiah's prophecies were specific: Jerusalem would burn, the temple would be demolished, and the people would serve Babylon for seventy years.

The people still refused to repent, and the prophecies were fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and its

temple. The Jews were taken captive by the Babylonians. In 586 BC, Babylonian armies breached Jerusalem's walls after a brutal eighteen-month siege. They systematically destroyed Solomon's Temple, burned the city, and carried the survivors into exile. The unthinkable had happened – Jerusalem, God's chosen city, lay in ruins.

Yet even in judgment, God's covenant faithfulness shone through. After 70 years of captivity in Babylon, the Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt their temple and their city. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the exiles returned, rebuilt the temple (completed in 515 BC), and restored Jerusalem's walls (completed in 445 BC). God had not abandoned His city or His people.

The Second Destruction and Gentile Domination

But they refused to receive their Messiah, and so the Lord gave a second group of prophecies relating to a period of time when Jerusalem would fall under Gentile control.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem during His final week, He wept over the city, declaring, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you" (Luke 19:41-44).

Jesus Himself in Luke 21 said the temple would be destroyed in 3 days and the city would be surrounded by armies which would proceed to desolate it (Luke 21:20). This prophecy

mingled the prediction of His own resurrection ("destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" referring to His body) with the coming destruction of Herod's Temple and Jerusalem itself.

These prophecies were fulfilled 40 years later when the Romans, under Titus, completely destroyed the city, including the Temple in 70 AD. The destruction was catastrophic. According to Josephus, over one million Jews perished during the siege and subsequent slaughter. The temple was burned, its stones pried apart to recover gold that had melted into cracks, literally fulfilling Jesus' words that "not one stone will be left on another."

This began the period Jesus called "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24)—an epoch during which Jerusalem would be "trampled on by the Gentiles." For the next 1,877 years (until 1967), Jerusalem would remain under various forms of Gentile control: Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Crusader, Mamluk, Ottoman, British, and Jordanian. Yet through all these occupations, Jewish presence and prayer for Jerusalem's restoration never ceased.

Jerusalem in End-Times Prophecy: Zechariah's Visions

The Prophetic Blueprint (Zechariah 12-14)

Four hundred years before Jesus, the prophet Zechariah gave a number of prophecies about the events that would affect Jerusalem in the end times just before the Second Coming of the Messiah.

Zechariah's prophecies regarding Jerusalem are among Scripture's most detailed and dramatic end-times predictions. Written around 520-518 BC, these prophecies looked forward to events still future even to our generation – events that would signal the approach of Messiah's return.

In Zechariah 12:1-6 it says: 1. The Jews will return to the land of Israel. 2. The Jews will occupy the city of Jerusalem. 3. The Israeli army will be like a "firepot among pieces of wood." 4. Jerusalem will become the focal point of world politics. 5. All the nations of the world will come together against Jerusalem.

Each of these prophecies deserves careful examination, particularly in light of modern fulfillment:

First: The Jews Will Return to the Land. After nearly 1,900 years of dispersion, Jews began returning to their ancestral homeland in significant numbers during the late 1800s. The Aliyah (immigration) movements brought waves of Jewish returnees who purchased land, established settlements, and revived Hebrew as a living language. This unprecedented return from worldwide dispersion fulfilled Ezekiel's prophecy: "I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land" (Ezekiel 36:24).

Second: The Jews Will Occupy Jerusalem. On June 7, 1967, during the Six-Day War, Israeli paratroopers entered Jerusalem's Old City and liberated the Temple Mount and Western Wall for the first time since 70 AD. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan declared at the Western Wall, "We have returned to our most sacred places, never to part from them again." This fulfilled Jesus' prophecy that Jerusalem would be trampled by Gentiles "until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke

21:24). The times of the Gentiles are approaching their consummation.

Third: The Israeli Army Like a "Firepot Among Pieces of Wood." Zechariah 12:6 declares, "On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples right and left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place." Israel's military victories despite overwhelming numerical disadvantages—the 1948 War of Independence, the 1967 Six-Day War, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War—demonstrate this prophetic reality. Time and again, Israel has prevailed against coalitions of Arab armies, fulfilling Zechariah's prediction with remarkable precision.

Fourth: Jerusalem Will Become the Focal Point of World Politics. No city on earth generates more international attention, UN resolutions, diplomatic negotiations, and media coverage than Jerusalem. The status of Jerusalem dominates Middle East peace talks, generates endless controversy, and captivates global attention disproportionate to its size. Nations debate which city should be Israel's capital. World leaders weigh in on Jerusalem's future. Exactly as Zechariah prophesied, Jerusalem has become the world's political focal point.

Fifth: All Nations Will Come Against Jerusalem. Zechariah 12:3 declares, "On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves." Zechariah 14:2 adds, "I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it." This prophecy awaits final fulfillment in the campaign of Armageddon, but the trajectory

is already evident. International pressure on Israel regarding Jerusalem increases, UN resolutions condemn Israeli actions, and global opinion increasingly turns against Israel's sovereignty over its own capital.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, expert on biblical prophecy and Israel, observes: "Zechariah 12-14 provides the clearest prophetic roadmap for events immediately preceding Messiah's return. The stage is being set before our eyes. Israel has returned. Jerusalem is occupied by Jews. The Israeli military has proven formidable. Jerusalem dominates world politics. The only remaining unfulfilled element is the final gathering of all nations against Jerusalem—and even that is beginning to take shape."

The Millennial Jerusalem: Capital of the Messianic Kingdom

Christ's Return and Reign

When the Lord returns, He is going to reign over all the world for a thousand years, and His reign of peace, righteousness and justice will be based in Jerusalem. This thousand-year reign, known as the Millennium, will finally fulfill all the Old Testament prophecies about Messiah's earthly kingdom.

Zechariah 14:4 describes Christ's return in dramatic terms: "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley." This will be no spiritual or symbolic coming – it will be a literal, physical return to the exact location from which Jesus ascended forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:11-12).

The transformation of Jerusalem during the Millennium will be breathtaking. According to Zechariah 14:10, the whole land around Jerusalem will become like the Arabah (a flat plain), but Jerusalem itself will be raised up and remain in its place. Geological upheavals accompanying Christ's return will dramatically alter the topography, elevating Jerusalem as a mountain above the surrounding terrain, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy: "In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it" (Isaiah 2:2).

Jerusalem as the Worldwide Center

"For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2). Jerusalem will be the political, economic and religious center of the world (Micah 4:1-7).

This is not hyperbole or poetic imagery – it is literal prophetic truth. During the Millennium, all governmental authority will flow from Jerusalem. All religious worship will orient toward Jerusalem. All economic prosperity will be linked to Jerusalem. Pastor John MacArthur explains: "The Millennium will reverse the effects of the Fall and the curse. Jerusalem, which has known more conflict and bloodshed than perhaps any city in history, will become the undisputed capital of a peaceful, prosperous, and righteous world under Christ's personal rule."

Zechariah further states that during the Millennium, all the nations of the world will be required to send delegations to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16). This annual pilgrimage will serve multiple purposes:

acknowledging Christ's kingship, receiving instruction in God's law, and maintaining covenantal relationship with the King. Those nations that fail to send representatives will receive no rain (Zechariah 14:17-18).

The law of Christ's kingdom will go forth from Jerusalem, teaching the nations God's ways. Nations will see that keeping God's law works. They will come to Jerusalem to learn how they can apply it in their own lands: "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" (Micah 4:2).

The Millennial Temple

A spectacular new temple will stand in Jerusalem during the Millennium—the temple described in meticulous detail in Ezekiel chapters 40-48. This fourth temple (following Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, and Herod's) will be larger and more glorious than any previous temple. It is believed that the Messiah will build this Millennial Temple to allow worship including memorial sacrifices during this 1,000-year kingdom.

Zechariah prophesied: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: 'Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord. Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a priest on His throne'" (Zechariah 6:12-13).

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, in his comprehensive work *Things to Come*, writes: "The millennium will be the period of the full manifestation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. There will

be the manifestation of glory associated with the humanity of Christ." Jerusalem will showcase this glory as no other place on earth, with the Messiah reigning from David's throne in unprecedented splendor.

Peace, Prosperity, and Righteousness

The Millennial Jerusalem will experience conditions humanity has longed for throughout history. In a world that is desperate for peace, the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ will be a welcomed time of Peace for all of mankind. Isaiah describes this era: "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4).

Jerusalem will no longer be a city under siege but a city of perfect security. Zechariah proclaims: "Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the Lord, 'and I will be its glory within'" (Zechariah 2:4-5).

The curse that has affected creation since the Fall will be substantially lifted. Longevity will return—people will live for hundreds of years, as in the days before the Flood. The earth will yield abundant harvests. Animals will live in harmony. The knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14).

Most remarkably, those who experienced resurrection and believers who survived the Tribulation will rule and reign with Christ. "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but

they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

The Eternal Jerusalem: The New Jerusalem

The Final Transition

Finally, the prophets tell us that the millennial Jerusalem will be replaced by a new Jerusalem which Jesus is preparing in Heaven now. At the conclusion of the Millennium, after Satan's final rebellion and the Great White Throne Judgment, God will usher in the eternal state.

At the end of the Millennium, there is a new heaven and new earth and then, the new Jerusalem will be lowered down to the new earth, and the Redeemed, in their new glorified bodies, will live in this new city in the presence of Almighty God, who will come down from Heaven to live forever with His children (Revelation 21:1-3).

This is the consummation of all God's purposes – the ultimate fulfillment of His desire to dwell with His people. John writes: "I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God'" (Revelation 21:3).

The Spectacular Description

What an amazing city this new Jerusalem will be! The Apostle John devotes 24 verses to its detailed description in Revelation 21 and 22. The description is so detailed, so specific, that we are compelled to understand it as describing a real, literal, physical city of unprecedented magnificence.

It will be a 1,500-mile cube with 12 foundations made of precious stones—each one named for one of the 12 apostles. The dimensions are staggering: 12,000 stadia, approximately 1,400 miles (2,250 km), about the distance from New York City to Dallas, Texas. If placed in the center of the United States, this city would stretch from Canada to Mexico and from the Appalachian Mountains to the California border. The area of the base is about 1,960,000 square miles (more than 5 million square km).

Some question whether these dimensions should be taken literally. Randy Alcorn, in his comprehensive study *Heaven*, responds decisively: "If these dimensions are not literal, why does Scripture specifically give the dimensions and then say 'by man's measurement, which the angel was using' (Revelation 21:17)? The emphasis on 'man's measurement' almost seems to be an appeal: 'Please believe it—the city is really this big!' Suppose God wanted to convey that the city really is fourteen hundred miles wide and deep and high. What else would we expect Him to say besides what this passage says?"

Likewise, there will be 12 pearly gates, one named for each tribe of Israel. These gates—each hewn from a single massive pearl—will never close, for there will be no night and no threat from which to protect the city's inhabitants.

The walls will be made of jasper. The city itself will be pure gold, like clear glass. The wall measures 144 cubits (approximately 216 feet) thick, demonstrating both beauty and impenetrable security. The foundations of the wall are adorned with twelve layers of precious stones: jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, beryl,

topaz, chrysoprase, jacinth, and amethyst (Revelation 21:19-20). Each stone blazes with color and light, reflecting the glory of God who illuminates the entire city.

John describes the street as "pure gold, like transparent glass" (Revelation 21:21). The transparency suggests that the gold is of such purity and so radiant with God's glory that it becomes translucent—a level of material perfection impossible in our current fallen world but entirely fitting for the eternal dwelling place of the redeemed.

No Temple—For God Is the Temple

One of the most startling features of the New Jerusalem is what it lacks. "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" (Revelation 21:22). Throughout human history, temples have been necessary—places where God's presence was localized and where human beings could approach the divine. But in the eternal state, the need for a temple vanishes because God's presence fills everything.

The city is lighted by the glory of God (verse 23). "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp" (Revelation 21:23). No electrical systems, no solar power, no candles or lamps—the Shekinah glory of God Himself will illuminate every corner of the eternal city.

The river of the water of life flows from the throne of God and the Lamb down the middle of the great street. On each side of the river stands the tree of life, yielding twelve crops of fruit—one for each month—and the leaves are for "the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:1-2). This harkens back to the Garden of Eden, where the tree of life stood before humanity's fall. In

the New Jerusalem, access to the tree of life is restored, symbolizing eternal, abundant, perfect life.

The Greatest Feature: God's Presence

The best part of this city will not be its beauty or its spaciousness. The best part will be the personal presence of Jesus our Lord and Almighty God, the Father.

Revelation 22 says we will eternally serve God in this city and that we will "see His face." This is the beatific vision—the direct, unmediated, face-to-face communion with God that is the ultimate longing of every human soul. I think that means we will have intimate, personal fellowship with our Creator eternally. And that causes me to stand in awe.

Pastor Sam Storms beautifully articulates the significance: "The purpose behind this portrayal of the city is not so that you might decipher the specific dimensions or overly analyze what each constituent part might mean. Rather, the intent is that you feel the collective force of its beauty and the dazzling brilliance of what God has created." The New Jerusalem represents the culmination of everything God has been working toward throughout all of human history—a people dwelling in perfect communion with their Creator in a place of unimaginable beauty and glory.

"No longer will there be any curse" (Revelation 22:3). The long, tragic consequences of the Fall—sin, death, decay, disease, pain, suffering—will be utterly eradicated. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Dr. John MacArthur reflects: "Heaven is not primarily about streets of gold or mansions or even eternal life, as wonderful as those realities are. Heaven is about being with God. Everything else pales in comparison to the glory of His presence. We were created for fellowship with God, and in the New Jerusalem, that fellowship will be unhindered, unending, and unspeakably glorious."

Conclusion: Jerusalem's Call to Every Heart

From David's conquest 3,000 years ago to the eternal New Jerusalem yet to come, this city stands at the absolute center of God's redemptive plan. Jerusalem has witnessed more history, more prophecy, more divine intervention than any location on earth. It has been destroyed and rebuilt, mourned and celebrated, conquered and liberated. Yet through it all, God's purposes for Jerusalem have never wavered.

The apostle Paul wrote that the earthly Jerusalem corresponds to "the Jerusalem that is above," which "is free, and she is our mother" (Galatians 4:26). Every believer in Jesus Christ is a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. Abraham "was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). That city is the New Jerusalem, and it is being prepared even now for those who love the Lord.

But Jerusalem's story also poses questions that demand personal response. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because the people did not recognize "the time of God's coming" to them (Luke 19:44). Many in our generation are making the same tragic mistake – missing the significance of the signs, ignoring

the prophetic fulfillments, dismissing God's clear revelation about Jerusalem's role in His plan.

Consider these realities:

First, Jesus is returning to Jerusalem. This is not metaphor or spiritual allegory. Zechariah 14:4 declares that His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. Acts 1:11 confirms that He will return "in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Are you ready for His return?

Second, God keeps His promises about Jerusalem with perfect precision. Every prophecy about Jerusalem's destruction was fulfilled exactly. The prophecies about Jerusalem's restoration are being fulfilled before our eyes. The prophecies about Jerusalem's future glory will be fulfilled just as literally. If God is this faithful to keep His word about a city, how much more will He keep His promises to individuals who trust in Christ?

Third, your eternal destination is connected to your relationship with the King who will reign from Jerusalem. Jesus declared, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). The New Jerusalem will be inhabited only by those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:27). Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?

Finally, how you view Jerusalem reflects your understanding of Scripture. To spiritualize away Jerusalem's significance, to deny the literal fulfillment of prophecies about this city, or to dismiss God's ongoing purposes for Jerusalem is to miss one of Scripture's most prominent themes. As you watch the news and see Jerusalem continually at the center of international

controversy, remember—this is exactly what the prophets predicted.

The question Jerusalem poses to every reader is simple but profound: Will you align yourself with God's purposes for this city and His people? Will you pray for the peace of Jerusalem, as Psalm 122:6 commands? Will you recognize that what happens in Jerusalem matters eternally because God has declared it so?

More importantly, will you ensure that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life so that you will be a citizen of the New Jerusalem? Will you trust in Jesus Christ—the One who died in Jerusalem, rose in Jerusalem, and will return to Jerusalem—as your Savior and Lord?

Jerusalem's story is not finished. The most glorious chapters are yet to be written. And by God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, you can be part of that eternal story, dwelling forever in the city whose architect and builder is God, seeing His face, serving Him eternally, and experiencing the joy for which you were created.

The choice is yours. Jerusalem awaits its King. Are you ready to meet Him?

SIGNIFICANCE OF ISRAEL IN END TIME PROPHECY

Introduction: God's Prophetic Masterpiece

Standing at the crossroads of three continents, a tiny nation barely the size of New Jersey commands the attention of the entire world. News broadcasts feature it daily. World leaders debate its policies. The United Nations passes more resolutions concerning it than any other nation on earth. This remarkable country – Israel – occupies less than one-sixth of one percent of the Middle East's landmass, yet it dominates headlines with supernatural consistency.

Why? Because Israel is not merely a geopolitical entity but God's prophetic masterpiece – His timepiece announcing that we are living in the final chapter of human history before Christ's return.

The rebirth of Israel in 1948 after nearly two millennia of dispersion stands as one of the most miraculous events in human history. No other ancient people has maintained its identity through such prolonged exile, endured such systematic persecution, or returned to reclaim its ancestral homeland. As Mark Twain observed in 1899, the Jew "is as prominent on the planet as any other people... His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers."

The prophecies concerning Israel form the skeleton key to understanding everything unfolding in our world today. More end times prophecies address the nation of Israel than any

other subject combined. In the Last Days, Israel becomes the epicenter – the main focal point – for all major events that will occur before Christ returns. As Dr. John Walvoord, former president of Dallas Theological Seminary, emphasized, "Of the hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament, a major portion of them relate to the future of Israel. If all these promises are taken literally, it becomes obvious that God has a definite plan for Israel as a nation."

Let there be no mistake: Israel remains God's chosen nation. The Church has not replaced Israel but has been grafted into God's redemptive plan alongside her. The Apostle Paul makes this crystal clear in Romans 11:1-2: "I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew."

Israel serves as God's prophetic timepiece. In Matthew 24, Jesus instructs us to keep our eyes fixed on Israel because it will signal when the end is near. He compares Israel to the fig tree – a classic biblical representation throughout Scripture. Just as a fig tree produces both edible and inedible fruit, so it was with the nation of Israel. Jews who wholeheartedly followed God were likened to "good figs," while rebellious Jews were compared to "bad figs" (Jeremiah 24:2-10). The Bible declares that at the end of this age, Israel will "blossom and bud" and "put forth new leaves" like a fig tree, and this greening will serve as an unmistakable sign of Jesus' return.

Our God sees the beginning from the end and knows all things. He operates on a divine schedule and has appointed specific times for prophetic events to unfold. In His love and mercy, God has graciously given us a glimpse into His schedule so we

won't be caught off guard when these events transpire. He has appointed Israel as His prophetic timepiece. If you want to know what time it is on God's end-times clock, simply observe what's happening in Israel.

Dr. David Jeremiah writes, "Israel is God's super sign of the end times. It is the most visible and dependable sign that we are truly living in the last days." When we witness Israel flourishing in her ancient homeland after centuries of exile, we are watching prophecy fulfilled before our very eyes. God uses the nation of Israel as an unmistakable sign to the world that Christ's return draws near.

Put simply, the Bible teaches that end-time events across the globe will be inextricably linked to Israel. Her destiny is wrapped up in God's final act of human history. Understanding Israel's role in prophecy unlocks the mystery of our times and illuminates the path ahead. Here are five crucial end-time prophecies concerning Israel that every believer must understand.

1. The Prophecy of Israel's Regathering

Key Scriptures:

Jeremiah 23:3 – "Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply."

Deuteronomy 30:3, 5 – "Then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you... And the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it."

Ezekiel 36:24 – "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land."

Isaiah 11:11-12 – "In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people... He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth."

Perhaps no prophecy has been more dramatically fulfilled in our generation than the regathering of Israel. Throughout history, Israel was scattered among the nations as a consequence of disobedience and idolatry. When God imposed the Mosaic Law, He warned explicitly: "Disobey and you will be scattered" (Deuteronomy 4:25-27). And scattered they were – driven to the far corners of the earth in successive waves of conquest and exile.

The Babylonian captivity in 586 BC scattered the southern kingdom. The Assyrian conquest in 722 BC had already dispersed the northern tribes. But the greatest dispersion came in 70 AD when Roman legions under Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Second Temple, initiating what became known as the Diaspora – a scattering that would last nearly 1,900 years.

During these long centuries of exile, the Jewish people endured persecution unlike any other ethnic group in history. Over 3,000 years of systematic hatred, forced conversions, expulsions, pogroms, and genocidal attempts sought to erase them from the earth. During the first and second centuries, the Romans killed an estimated 1.8 million Jews. Medieval Europe

witnessed countless massacres. The Spanish Inquisition tortured and expelled hundreds of thousands. Russian pogroms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries claimed countless lives.

Yet the darkest chapter came during the Nazi Holocaust, which resulted in the systematic murder of six million Jews, including 1.5 million children—one-third of the world's Jewish population. This genocide reduced the worldwide Jewish population to approximately 10 million. That any survived at all defies natural explanation.

But God had made a promise, and God keeps His promises.

The fulfillment of Israel's regathering began in the late 1800s with the rise of the Zionist movement. Jews began returning to their ancient homeland in small numbers, purchasing land and establishing agricultural communities. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 marked international recognition of the Jewish right to a homeland in Palestine. Immigration accelerated through the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, even as British Mandatory authorities tried to restrict it.

Then came May 14, 1948—a date that will forever stand as one of history's most miraculous moments. Israel declared independence, and after 1,878 years, a sovereign Jewish state once again existed in the Promised Land. As Isaiah prophesied, "Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children" (Isaiah 66:8).

Charles Feinberg, Old Testament scholar, declared, "The restoration of Israel is one of the greatest miracles of all ages.

To say that such a restoration was merely the result of natural processes or political maneuvering is to be blind to the plain facts of Scripture and history."

However, many mistakenly mark 1948 as the complete fulfillment of this prophecy. While tremendously significant, it represents only one phase of an ongoing process. The 1948 declaration merely formalized what had already been developing for decades—Israel was back from the dead. But the total fulfillment continues even today.

Since 1948, waves of immigration have brought Jews home from over 120 countries. Operation Magic Carpet airlifted nearly 50,000 Yemenite Jews. Operation Moses and Operation Solomon rescued Ethiopian Jews. The collapse of the Soviet Union triggered a massive exodus of Russian Jews to Israel—over one million made aliyah (immigration to Israel) between 1989 and 2006. Today, the Jewish population of Israel exceeds 6.9 million, with the worldwide Jewish population having recovered to approximately 15 million.

Dr. Randall Price, archaeologist and prophecy expert, observes, "The modern regathering is nothing short of the finger of God writing on the pages of history. Every Jew who returns to Israel is another piece of prophecy being fulfilled right before our eyes."

Ezekiel 37 presents the famous vision of the Valley of Dry Bones—a prophetic picture of Israel's resurrection as a nation. God asks Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" Then God commands the bones to come together, receive sinews and flesh, and finally receive breath to become a living army. This is precisely what we've witnessed. The scattered bones (Jews) have come

together (regathered). The nation has taken form (1948 statehood). But the final stage—the breath of spiritual life—awaits future fulfillment, which brings us to our second prophecy.

The regathering continues. God is gathering His people as He promised, from the north, south, east, and west. As Jeremiah 31:10 declares, "He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd." We are living witnesses to this ancient promise being kept.

2. The Prophecy of Israel's Restoration (Spiritual Regeneration)

Key Scriptures:

Zechariah 12:10 — "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."

Hosea 3:4-5 — "For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar and without ephod or household idols. Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days."

Ezekiel 36:25-27 — "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and

give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees."

Romans 11:25-26 – "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved."

While Israel has been physically regathered, she remains largely in spiritual unbelief. The dry bones have assembled, but the breath of spiritual life has not yet been fully breathed into them. This is exactly what prophecy predicted – Israel would return to the land in unbelief and later experience a profound spiritual awakening.

Hosea's prophecy in chapter 3, verses 4-5, precisely describes Israel's condition. Verse 4 depicts the state of Israel ever since the temple was destroyed by Rome in 70 AD: "For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar and without ephod or household idols." This period has certainly been going on "for many days" – nearly 2,000 years. Without a king, without temple sacrifices, without the priestly system – this has been Israel's reality throughout the church age.

But verse 5 announces a dramatic shift: "Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days." There will be another period "afterward" called "the last days" when Israel will seek the Lord and their Messianic King.

What about David as their king? Since Hosea wrote this long after David's death, this cannot refer literally to the historical King David. Instead, it points to the One who would inherit David's throne—the Messiah, Jesus Christ. When Hosea penned these words, David's ultimate heir remained unnamed. Now, that King stands revealed as Jesus, the Christ, the Son of David.

Zechariah 12:10 provides stunning detail about this future awakening. God Himself declares, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him."

This remarkable statement equates "Me" (God who is speaking) with the One "whom they have pierced"—unmistakably referring to Christ and His crucifixion, which was carried out upon His rejection by Israel's leadership. The prophecy reveals that in the last days, Israel's eyes will be opened. With deep mourning and genuine repentance, they will recognize their Messiah as the One their forefathers pierced and rejected.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, founder of Ariel Ministries and expert on Jewish prophecy, explains, "The national regeneration of Israel will be both sudden and complete. When the Jewish people finally recognize Yeshua as their Messiah, it will not be a gradual acceptance spanning generations, but a dramatic, nation-wide recognition that will occur in a single day."

This aligns with Zechariah 13:1, which immediately follows: "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and

impurity." The fountain speaks of spiritual cleansing—the application of Christ's atoning blood to the nation that rejected Him.

Revelation 1:7 alludes to this prophecy of Zechariah: "Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all peoples on earth will mourn because of him." When Christ returns in glory, Israel will finally see and recognize their King. The veil will be lifted. The scales will fall from their eyes.

Paul describes this mystery in Romans 11. He explains that Israel has experienced a partial hardening that will last "until the full number of the Gentiles has come in" (v. 25). But then comes the glorious promise: "And in this way all Israel will be saved" (v. 26). Paul continues, quoting Isaiah, "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins" (Romans 11:26-27).

Pastor J.D. Farag notes, "When we see Israel today, we're witnessing the stage being set. The physical regathering has happened. Now we await the spiritual regeneration—when the Jewish people will cry out, 'Baruch haba b'shem Adonai' (Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord), as Jesus predicted they would before He returns."

This national salvation will be Israel's finest hour—the moment when God's chosen people embrace their chosen Messiah. It will vindicate God's faithfulness to His covenant promises and demonstrate that He has never abandoned Israel, despite her long centuries of unbelief.

3. The Prophecy of Israel Rebuilding the Temple

Key Scriptures:

Daniel 9:27 – "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Matthew 24:15 – "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand –"

Revelation 11:1-2 – "I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, 'Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months.'"

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 – "Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."

The rebuilding of the Jewish Temple stands as one of the most anticipated yet controversial prophecies concerning Israel's end-time role. While these scriptures don't provide exhaustive architectural details about the Third Temple, they clearly reveal its presence and necessity during the Tribulation period.

To understand this prophecy, we must first recognize the biblical pattern of temples. There have been two previous

temples, and Scripture predicts two future temples – the Third Temple (Tribulation Temple) and the Fourth Temple (Millennial Temple).

The First Temple was built in 957 BC by King Solomon (1 Kings 5-9). This magnificent structure replaced the portable tabernacle constructed by Moses in the wilderness. Solomon's Temple stood as one of the ancient world's wonders, its glory legendary. It was totally destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC, initiating the seventy years of captivity prophesied by Jeremiah.

The Second Temple was authorized by Cyrus, king of Persia, in 537 BC following Babylon's fall to the Medo-Persian Empire. Initially modest, this temple was later extensively renovated and expanded by Herod the Great, beginning around 20 BC. Jesus Himself taught and ministered in this temple. Tragically, the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD when they annihilated Jerusalem – an event Jesus specifically prophesied (Mark 13:1-2; Luke 19:41-44). With this destruction, Israel ceased to exist as a sovereign nation, and the Jewish people began their long dispersion.

For nearly 2,000 years, no temple has stood in Jerusalem. The Temple Mount – Judaism's holiest site – has been occupied since 691 AD by the Dome of the Rock, Islam's third holiest shrine. This creates one of the world's most sensitive geopolitical situations.

Yet Scripture clearly indicates a Third Temple will exist during the Great Tribulation. Daniel 9:27 describes a seven-year period (the Tribulation) initiated by the Antichrist confirming a covenant with Israel. This covenant will apparently permit the

Jews to rebuild their temple and restart sacrificial worship on the Temple Mount—a development of monumental significance.

Daniel then reveals that at the midpoint of this seven-year period (3.5 years in), the Antichrist will betray Israel, put an end to temple sacrifices, and commit the "abomination of desolation" in the temple. Jesus references this specific event in Matthew 24:15, telling His disciples to flee Jerusalem when they see it occur. This can only happen if a temple exists.

Similarly, Revelation 11:1-2 describes John measuring the temple and its worshipers during the Tribulation. Paul confirms in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 that the Antichrist "sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."

Dr. Thomas Ice, prophecy scholar, states, "The Bible is clear that there will be a temple in Jerusalem during the tribulation period. The only question is not if, but when it will be built."

Remarkably, preparations for the Third Temple are already underway. The Temple Institute in Jerusalem has spent decades researching, designing, and creating over 60 sacred vessels and priestly garments according to biblical specifications. The institute has trained priests (Kohanim) from the Levitical line. Architectural plans exist. Red heifers—required for the purification ceremony described in Numbers 19—have been bred. In September 2022, five unblemished red heifers were brought to Israel from Texas, sparking worldwide attention.

Rabbi Chaim Richman of the Temple Institute declared, "We are not just talking about the Temple. We are doing it." The

movement to rebuild has transitioned from theoretical to practical.

The political and religious obstacles remain immense. The Temple Mount is controlled by the Islamic Waqf. Any attempt to build a Jewish temple there would likely trigger regional or even global conflict. Yet prophecy indicates this will somehow be resolved – likely through the covenant mentioned in Daniel 9:27.

After the Tribulation and Christ's return, a Fourth Temple will be constructed – the glorious Millennial Temple. Ezekiel devotes nine chapters (40-48) to its detailed description. This temple will serve as the centerpiece of Christ's thousand-year reign on earth. Ezekiel 43:7 records God's declaration: "This is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." This speaks of Jesus our Lord ruling from Jerusalem during the Millennium.

The Third Temple prophecy reminds us that God's plan for Israel remains on track. What seemed impossible for centuries is now becoming possible. The stage is being set for the final act of human history.

4. The Prophecy of Israel's Covenant with the Antichrist

Key Scriptures:

Daniel 9:27 – "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Isaiah 28:14-18 – "Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem. You boast, 'We have entered into a covenant with death, with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place.'... Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand."

1 Thessalonians 5:3 – "While people are saying, 'Peace and safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape."

Israel's entering into a deceptive covenant with the Antichrist represents a pivotal end-time prophecy. This treaty marks the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation period and sets in motion a cascade of prophetic events that will culminate in Christ's return.

Daniel 9:27 reveals the critical details: "Then he (the Antichrist) will confirm a covenant with many for one week (seven years)." This is not merely a peace treaty between neighboring nations—this is a covenant with far-reaching implications involving Israel and multiple parties ("many"). The Hebrew word translated "confirm" (*gabar*) means to strengthen or enforce, suggesting this may involve reinforcing or guaranteeing an existing agreement.

Why would Israel enter such a covenant? The answer lies in her precarious position. Surrounded by hostile neighbors, facing existential threats, and longing for security and the ability to worship at the Temple Mount, Israel will find the Antichrist's

offer irresistible. He will present himself as Israel's protector and problem-solver, promising peace and religious freedom.

Dr. David Reagan of Lamb & Lion Ministries explains, "The Antichrist will burst onto the world scene as a man of peace. He will be hailed as a diplomatic genius when he accomplishes what no one else has been able to do—bring peace to the Middle East and allow the Jews to rebuild their temple."

This covenant will produce several immediate results:

- The reinstatement of daily sacrifices in Israel at a rebuilt temple
- The rise of the "man of lawlessness," a religious figure who claims divine authority
- A false sense of peace and security spreading across the region and world
- Geopolitical maneuvering that positions armies around Israel and Jerusalem

But Isaiah warns this agreement is fundamentally "a covenant with death" (Isaiah 28:15, 18). It is founded on deception and will guarantee war rather than prevent it. The leaders who make this covenant are called "scoffers" who have "made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place." They trust in human wisdom and political maneuvering rather than God's protection.

Pastor Jack Hibbs emphasizes, "Israel will make this covenant in desperation, seeking peace at any cost. But it will be the most costly mistake in their history—until they finally recognize their true Messiah."

The covenant will hold for the first half of the Tribulation—3.5 years of relative calm. But at the midpoint, everything changes. Daniel 9:27 continues: "In the middle of the week he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings." The Antichrist will betray Israel, break the covenant, stop temple worship, and reveal his true nature.

This betrayal fulfills Jesus' warning in John 5:43: "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him." Israel rejected Jesus but will initially accept the Antichrist—a tragic but prophesied reality.

The breaking of this covenant unleashes the second half of the Tribulation, known as the Great Tribulation—a period of unprecedented suffering. Jesus describes it in Matthew 24:21: "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again."

The Antichrist will use the broken covenant as justification to invade Israel. His armies will seek to capture Jerusalem and establish his throne in the Third Temple. This sets the stage for the final prophecy.

Today, we see increasing calls for a comprehensive Middle East peace agreement. The Abraham Accords of 2020 normalized relations between Israel and several Arab nations—UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan. While these agreements represent positive developments, they also demonstrate that the kind of regional covenant Daniel describes is now politically feasible. The stage is being set.

When the Antichrist finally emerges and brokers his covenant, many will hail it as humanity's greatest achievement. Instead, it will be the opening act of humanity's darkest hour. Yet even this darkness serves God's purpose – driving Israel to finally recognize and call upon her true Messiah.

5. The Prophecy of the Abomination of Desolation

Key Scriptures:

Daniel 12:11 – "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

Daniel 9:27 – "And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Matthew 24:15-21 – "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains... For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equaled again."

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 – "He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."

Revelation 13:14-15 – "He ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed."

The Abomination of Desolation stands as perhaps the most dramatic and horrifying event in end-times prophecy concerning Israel. This single act divides the Tribulation into two distinct periods and triggers the Great Tribulation—the darkest hours of human history.

Jesus considered this prophecy so important that He specifically commanded, "let the reader understand" (Matthew 24:15). This phrase signals that we must pay careful attention and grasp the significance of what's being revealed.

Here are the key elements of this prophecy:

Timing: It occurs precisely at the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation—exactly 3.5 years (1,260 days) after the Antichrist confirms his covenant with Israel. Daniel 12:11 specifies "from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be 1,290 days" — indicating 1,290 days remain until Christ's return (the extra 30 days likely accounting for judgment and transition activities).

The Betrayal: The Antichrist violently breaks his covenant with Israel. Having promised peace and protection, he now reveals his true character—"the man of lawlessness" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). He forcibly ends all temple sacrifices and offerings, desecrating the holy place.

Death and Resurrection: Revelation 13:3 indicates the Antichrist suffers what appears to be a fatal wound: "One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed." Most prophecy scholars believe the Antichrist will be assassinated at this juncture, likely in retaliation for breaking the covenant. However,

through Satan's power, he will be resurrected – a counterfeit of Christ's resurrection designed to deceive the world.

Dr. Mark Hitchcock writes, "Satan's masterpiece of deception is the Antichrist. And his counterfeit resurrection will be the ultimate credential that causes the world to worship him. People will say, 'Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?'" (Revelation 13:4).

Exaltation: Following his resurrection, the Antichrist enters the Third Temple, seats himself in the holy place, and declares himself to be God. Paul describes this blasphemous act in 2 Thessalonians 2:4: "He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."

The Image: Revelation 13 describes how the False Prophet (the second beast) erects an image of the Antichrist in the temple and, through demonic power, gives it life so it can speak and demand worship. All who refuse to worship this image will be killed. This animated image represents the ultimate desecration of God's holy place – the "abomination" that makes the temple "desolate."

Global Dictatorship: At this point, energized by Satan's full power after his supposed resurrection, the Antichrist assumes control of the entire world government. He establishes a totalitarian regime that demands universal worship. Revelation 13:16-17 describes his economic control: "He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark."

Israel's Flight: Jesus specifically warns Jewish believers in Matthew 24:16: "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." This will be a time of intense persecution targeting Jews and all who refuse to worship the Antichrist. Many scholars believe Israel will flee to the rock city of Petra in modern-day Jordan, where God will supernaturally protect a remnant for 3.5 years (Revelation 12:6, 14).

Pastor Amir Tsarfati of Behold Israel Ministries observes, "The Abomination of Desolation is the point of no return. Everything accelerates from this moment. The Antichrist drops his mask of peace and reveals himself as the beast. The Great Tribulation begins, and the countdown to Armageddon starts ticking."

Intensified Persecution: Jesus describes what follows: "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again" (Matthew 24:21). The second half of the Tribulation will be far worse than the first. Revelation's seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments will intensify. The Antichrist will wage war against "the saints"—both Jewish and Gentile believers who come to faith during this period (Revelation 13:7).

Historical Foreshadowing: This prophecy has a historical foreshadowing. In 167 BC, the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the Second Temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar and erecting a statue of Zeus. This act sparked the Maccabean revolt. However, Jesus makes clear that Daniel's prophecy points beyond this historical event to a future, more terrible fulfillment.

The Abomination of Desolation serves as the ultimate test of worship – will people worship the true God or the false christ? It demonstrates the depths of human rebellion and Satan's hatred for both God and His people Israel. Yet even this darkest moment serves God's redemptive purposes.

As the Antichrist exalts himself in the temple, he unknowingly fulfills the very prophecies that prove Jesus is the true Messiah. And as persecution intensifies, many Jews will finally recognize that the One their ancestors rejected is indeed their promised Deliverer. Their eyes will be opened, and they will cry out for Jesus to return – which He will do at the Battle of Armageddon to rescue His people and establish His kingdom.

Conclusion: What Time Is It?

Standing at this unique moment in history, we are witnesses to prophecy unfolding before our eyes. Israel – scattered for nearly two millennia – has been regathered. Israel – dead as a nation for 1,878 years – lives again. Israel – the impossible dream of countless generations – is a thriving reality. The fig tree has budded. The dry bones have assembled. Go

Key Scriptures Regarding Israel

1. All the nations of the world will come together against Israel over the issue of the control of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:1-3). Fulfillment: Currently occurring.
2. The Antichrist will intervene and guarantee the security of Israel, enabling the Jews to rebuild their Temple (Daniel 9:27).
3. At the end of three and a half years, the Antichrist will enter the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem and declare himself to be God (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15-18, & 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).
4. The Jews will reject the Antichrist, and he will respond with an attempt to annihilate them, killing two-thirds of them in the process (Revelation 12:13-17 & Zechariah 13:8-9).
5. At the end of the Tribulation, when the Jews have come to the end of themselves, they will turn to God and receive Jesus (Yeshua) as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10, Romans 9:27-28, & Romans 11:25-27).
6. Jesus will return and regather all believing Jews to Israel (Deuteronomy 30:1-9).
7. Israel will be established as the prime nation in the world (Isaiah 2:1-4 & Micah 4:1-7).
8. The Lord will bless the Jewish remnant by fulfilling all the promises He has made to Israel (Isaiah 60:1-62:7).
9. The blessings of God will flow out to all the nations through the Jewish people during the Millennial rule of Jesus (Zechariah 8:22-23).

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Psalm 122:6

WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD SUPPORT ISRAEL

As Christians we should have a different worldview than what we hear or read in the secular news. Our perspective concerning world issues should be from a “Biblical Worldview”. The same is true for our attitude towards Israel. When one understands God’s plan and the role Israel plays in that plan things become much clearer.

A Biblical worldview is based on God’s revealed truth in His Word. The Word of God should shape and develop our core values and beliefs. Our worldview of God, creation, moral order, and purpose should be the foundation of our perspective concerning social, fiscal, political, personal, and world issues.

Some Christians hesitate to support Israel because they disagree with their politics or national history. Let me say supporting Israel doesn’t mean justifying everything Israel has done or does as a country. In fact, throughout the history of Israel God condemned many of the things they did and their current situation is a direct result of their disobedience to God. However, none of that changes God’s love or support for Israel.

A person can easily become confused and place their support in the wrong place if they don’t have a sound Biblical worldview. Their thinking can get so twisted they begin calling what is good as evil and evil as good. This is why so many adopt misguided views of support for enemies of Israel. We are called to stand with Israel against the continued rise of demonically driven forces to eradicate the Jewish people.

Our standing with Israel is not about politics, it is about the Word of God. We understand the consequences of political forces are often significant and important, but as believers our position must be based in the truth of God’s Word.

The Bible tells us Jesus one day will return to rescue Israel from the world's attack upon them and to fulfill God's covenant with Israel. Zech. 14:4 says the feet of Jesus will stand on the Mount of Olives on that day. It is probably the reason why most of the world news is focused toward this tiny speck of land. Here are 3 reasons we should stand with Israel as Christians from a pure Biblical position.

1. Because God Instructs Us to Comfort Israel

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God." (Isaiah 40:1) This is clearly not a call to the Jewish people, otherwise they would be comforting themselves. Rather, it is a call to a Gentile people who serve God to stand alongside Israel. Our responsibility to bless and comfort her clearly is not a suggestion or discussion point where God invites our opinion. He Himself, the Creator of heaven and earth who calls out the stars by name (Isaiah 40:26), tells us to arise and stand with His people in comfort and love.

2. Because Israel Is God's Chosen Nation

"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." (Deuteronomy 7:6). Israel was chosen by God as a nation to fulfill His purposes. Israel is the Apple of God's Eye. God judges those who abuse the Jewish people. (Zech. 2:8) God also gave the title deed of the land of Israel to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants forever. (*Genesis 15:18; 17:2-8; 26:3*) There is no neutral ground. Either you're for Israel or not. If not, you are for their enemies. As Christians, we must stand up for our Jewish friends and the nation of Israel. These are God's very chosen people!

3. Because We Owe a Debt to Israel

*“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for **salvation is from the Jews.**”* (John 4:22) This is an indisputable, historical fact. Without the Jews we would have no patriarchs, no prophets, no apostles, no Bible – and no Savior! This is true for ever culture – Arabs, Africans, Asians, Europeans, Russians, Americans or Chinese. Our salvation came through the Jewish people. If you are a believer, you cannot be consistent with the whole of Scripture and take a passive position toward the Jews and Israel. As Christians, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Jewish people and will stand with Israel, because they are forever linked with the spiritual promises of God.

“To stand with Israel” –

- Is to agree with what God says in His Word about the Jewish people: that He chose them as a people for Himself, He dearly loves them, is faithful to His everlasting covenants made with them.
- It means supporting the State of Israel’s right to exist is based on Scripture. Standing with Israel means believing the State of Israel has the right to defend herself against and respond to attacks against her land and people.
- Last but not least it means praying for and blessing Israel.

SUMMARY

n accurate truthful understanding of who Israel is crucial. Hopefully this mini-book will help. We have an alarming rise of antisemitism across the world right now, even in our universities here in the United States and within some Christian circles. We have people supporting anti- Jewish groups and marching in step with the false narrative that Israel is an apartheid state. I don't think these people even know what that truly means, it's just something that's parroted!

Jewish hate is nothing new. Egypt wanted to destroy the Jews when Pharaoh gave the order to murder the Jewish baby boys (Exodus 1). Ancient Persia (modern Iran) wanted to eradicate the Jews through the wicked plot of Haman (Esther 3). Hitler had his "Final Solution" to destroy the Jewish people and ultimately murdered over 6 million of them in the Holocaust. But God intervened. It is the same demonic spirit at work in current day enemies of Israel, like Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran – who back these organizations.

God will intervene again. Whether you are a Gentile or a Jew, the same God who is keeping His promise to Abraham's chosen offspring will keep every promise to people who put their trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and worships Him as Lord. He will protect and preserve you. Your life will be a living testimony of the blessing a covenant relationship with Him offers. As part of the Church, you will be a conduit of blessing to the world. And when the Bride of Christ is raptured in the twinkling of an eye, He will gather you to Himself with all the other believers who have put their faith in Jesus.

We pray Lord - Come quickly. (Rev. 22_20) Until then we pray for the peace of Israel.. Amen

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

All About Israel



The nation of Israel is like no other nation on the face of the earth. It is God ordained, God decreed and a God protecte nations. Israel is God's prophetic timepiece. The reutrnn of Jesus is connected to God's covenant with Israel. The church did not replace Israel. It is important for us as believers to understand God's plan for Israel. This book will help you to known more about Israel.

> *"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!*

Psalm 33:12

> *"Whoever blesses Israel will be blessed, And whoever curses Israel will be cursed."*

Numbers 24:9

THE HOLY LAND

