

## Genesis 12 - The Jews – Past, Present, and Future

November 14, 2021

We've been looking at Gen. 1-11, chapters which are foundational to God's word, and to God's work in this world. To understand God's plans for us and for this world, we need a good grasp of these chapters. And these first 11 chapters lead up to Gen. 12. And in Gen. 12 we see that God begins working through the person of Abram, and from there, through his descendants, people we call the Israelites, the Jewish people. The whole rest of the Old Testament is centered around and focused on the Israelites, and explains how God worked through them, and used them for His eternal purposes, purposes that relate to the OT times, Christ's coming, the church age, and all eternity.

Today, I want to summarize God's working with the Jews from the time of Abraham up to the present time and then into the future. Last week, we looked at the promises God gave to Abram in Gen. 12 that He'd bless him by giving him a great nation, a great name and great blessings, blessings that would affect billions of people and be seen all over the world, not in his time, but in the future. And these promises from Gen. 12 were repeated and expanded upon. Gen. 13:14-15; Gen. 15:5-6; Gen. 17:4-7; Gen. 28:14; Ps. 105:8-11; Ps. 106:45-48; Ps. 111:2, 6-9

Gen. 12 to the end of Gen., Gen. 50, is all about God working through Abraham and his son Isaac, his grandson Jacob, and his great-grandson, Joseph. And God's purpose was to bring about the birth of the nation of Israel, and He had a unique way of doing it. First, God sent Joseph down to Egypt, and later his father and brothers came down to Egypt because there was a famine and they needed food. And they all stayed there, and over the next 400 years, God blessed them and caused them to be very fruitful.

Then it was time for the Jews to leave Egypt and head to the promised land, to officially become a nation. And God raised up Moses to lead the Jews out of Egypt, and they had to go through the desert, which ended up being a 40-year journey. While in the desert, God gives them laws to follow so they could worship and obey Him. And He gave them sacrifices to carry out which were how their sins would be temporarily dealt with, and were also a picture of the coming Messiah, the One who'd make the final and full payment for their sins, enabling them to be righteous in God's sight.

Well, sadly, the Jewish people sinned a lot. Ps. 78:17-19, 22, 32; Ps. 106:7, 13, 14, 16, 21, 24-25, 28-29, 33-38. In all this, God was merciful, He kept His word, He didn't go back on His promise, on the covenant He made with them. Ps. 106:40-48  
- Many Jews sinned, but God raised up a remnant of believers who remained faithful to Him, a remnant that He would work through and use for His purposes. And God raised up Joshua, who led the Jews into the promised land. And so, the Jews finally had their own land, a blessed land, a land of milk and honey.

After that, God raised up Judges, people like Gideon, Deborah, and Samson, who for the next 340 years, led the Jews and saved them from their enemies. But the people were still very sinful. In fact, the last vs. of the book of Judges said, "*everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*" Well, the final judge is Samuel, a very godly man. 1 Sam. 12:22-25

Well, the Jews clamor for a king to rule over them like the other countries had, and so God gives them kings. The first was Saul who wasn't so good, and the second was David, the best of all kings. David and his son Solomon ruled over Israel during their glory years, when they were the most powerful and prosperous country in the world. But in general, the people continued to be sinful. And God judged the people for their sin, in accordance with what God told them in Deut. 28. There were plagues, wars, famines, and all kinds of afflictions. And during this time, there were bad kings and good kings, like Asa, Hezekiah, and Jehoshaphat, kings we read about in 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles.

- But one more thing - the people's sin resulted in the splitting of the nation of Israel into 2 parts, the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah.

And so the Jews were very sinful, and God kept judging them. And God sent prophets, like Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah, who warned the people to repent of their sins, and for the most part, they didn't repent. Finally, God's patience reached a limit, and so God had them exiled, the northern kingdom in 724 BC and the southern kingdom in 586 BC. But God promised the Jews that He'd bring them back in 70 years, which is exactly what He did. He used godly men like Ezra and Nehemiah to lead a remnant back. Despite opposition, they rebuilt the city, the wall, and the temple, and once again offered sacrifices to God.

In Gen. 3, we read that God wanted to bring the Messiah into the world through the seed of the woman, which is the single most important purpose of the Jews. And so Jesus had all these ancestors, from Abraham and Isaac to Judah to David and Solomon, etc. And Matt. 1 and Luke 3 give a complete listing of Jesus' earthly ancestors. It's truly amazing and miraculous to see how God had this all planned out, and then brought it about over the course of 2000 years. Rev. 12:1-5

The prophets predicted the coming Messiah. Mic. 5:2, Is. 9:6. And so Jesus Christ comes to earth - He comes to earth as a baby and grows up and become a man. And He's the Son of God and also the Son of Man, a perfect man. And His main purpose was to save man from his sin. Jn. 1:29, Lk. 19:10, Rom. 5:8. Jesus Christ did the most important thing ever done on this earth - He died to pay for people's sins and then rose from the dead, thereby gaining victory over sin, death, and hell. The Jew's purpose then, at least this part of it, was fulfilled.

After Jesus Christ rose again, He ascended into heaven. And through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, God's word, and the 12 apostles, the church was started in Jerusalem. The 12 apostles were Jews, and initially, lots of Jewish people were saved. But as time went on, the Jews grew spiritually harder. Finally, in 70 AD, the Romans came and destroyed Jerusalem and the Jews were scattered all over the world. Luke 19:41-44

Luke 21:20-24. This sums up about 2000 yrs. of Jewish history. The Jews were persecuted and scattered, but they've come back. This was predicted in the Old Testament. Ezek. 36-37 - Rom. 11 tells us that the Jews would have hard hearts during the church age, that not many would get saved, which has without a doubt, been true. But it predicts that a large remnant of Jews will be saved at the end of this church age. Rom. 11:25-27 And so from Rom. 11 and Luke 21, we see that God still has plans for the Jews. And God has been faithful to all these plans, for in the 1880's, God started bringing the Jews back to Israel - and their gradual return to Israel over all these yrs. is one of the most incredible and remarkable events in human history. Same people, same land, lang., cult., rel.

And in the 1940's, Hitler and the German Reich killed around 6 million Jews. But God was sovereign, for these deaths were instrumental in Israel becoming a nation in 1948. - And that the Jews are now back in their land means we're living in the end-times, the last years of the church age, the years leading up to Christ's return to rapture the church.

Now I need to explain something here. In Christianity, some question whether these promises from God to the Jews are still valid. Some Christians believe they've been cancelled, are null and void. They say that God canceled His promises to the Jews because they crucified Jesus and rejected Him as their Savior. Let me share why this is not true:

1. God's promises to the Jews are unconditional and God doesn't ever go back on His word.
2. Some say the promises God made to the Jews were transferred to the church, but God never says that in His word. And when you carefully examine these promises, you realize that it's not possible for most of them to be transferred to the church. Isaiah 60-62
3. People who say the promises are for the church interpret the vss. allegorically and metaphorically, and that's not how you interpret the Bible. For example, in the OT, when there's the word Israel, they often substitute the word church for Israel and you just can't do that.
4. Many of these promises have the word eternal or forever in them, and if God promises something and says it's forever, then it's forever. That's that. Gen. 13:15, Ps. 72:18-19
5. The fact that God brought the Jews back to their land is one of the most amazing miracles ever, and as I said earlier, the kind of thing that's never happened with any country ever before. And that it happened is a sure sign that God has not finished His work for them, but rather, will fulfill His promises to them.
6. Many vss. in the NT talk about the Jews, and why would they be there if they weren't for the Jews? Matt 24:9-14, 15-26; Luke 21:12-19, 20-24; 2 Th. 2:1-4; Rev. 7:1-8, 9-14. All these side-by-side passages of the church and the Jews written in the context of prophecies about the end-times are some of the most conclusive proofs that God's promises and plans for the Jews are still valid and will be carried out.

Dan. 9:24-27. These vss. talk about the 70 weeks of Daniel. You need to know about this to understand the timing of God's end-time's working with the Jews and the church. Now each of these weeks represents 7 years, and so 70 weeks is a total of 490 years. These weeks started in 445 BC during the time of Nehemiah. And the first 69 weeks, which is 483 years, takes us to the exact date when Christ was crucified, which was around 30AD. But the 70<sup>th</sup> week hasn't started yet, but it will start in the near future.

Let me explain what'll be happening in the future as it relates to the Jews and the church:

1. There will be birth pains affecting the Jews and people over the world – there will be more and more wars, earthquakes, plagues, and famines, i.e. – food shortages.
2. The Jews will make a peace treaty with other nations, and this will happen at the beginning of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. And the future Antichrist will be a key figure in this.
3. The Jews will build a temple in Jerusalem and will start offering sacrifices again.
4. The Antichrist will be revealed at the midpoint of Dan. 70<sup>th</sup> week, the 3½ year point, and discerning Jews and Christians will know who he is. The Antichrist will desolate, will desecrate the temple in Jerusalem, and then he will start persecuting the Jews, but many of them will escape and be supernaturally protected. Rev. 12:13-17
5. The Antichrist will begin persecuting the Christians, and this is called great tribulation.
6. The rapture of the church happens sometime during the last part of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, at a time unknown to us. Then God's wrath will be poured out upon the earth.
7. At the end of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, a large remnant of Jews will be saved. Dan 9:24
8. A short time after that, the millennial kingdom age begins, that 1000-year period when Christ reigns over the earth from Jerusalem. He will be joined by those Jews who were just saved, and by all believers from all time, including us, and we will all reign with Christ and serve Him and do our part on this restored earth. Psalm 47, 67, 72

And so God worked with the Jews from about 2000 BC up until the time of Christ, which is about 2000 years, and since then, He has focused on the church, which is also about 2000 years, and in the near future, God will work with believers from both the OT time and the church age, that is, He will work with all believers from all time. And then all the promises God gave the Jewish people, and all the promises God gave the church will be fulfilled. Heb. 11:39-40. And God will be glorified like never before. Isaiah 6:3, Hab. 2:14, Ps. 47:6-7, Ps. 67:3-5, Ps. 72:18-19, Ps. 86:9, Ps. 96:1